Hungarian

An Essential Grammar

This is a concise, user-friendly guide to the most important structures of this fascinating language.

All students of Hungarian, whether beginners or at intermediate and advanced levels, will welcome its clarity of presentation and jargon-free explanations. It is ideal for those studying independently or following a taught course.

Topics include:

- Verbal prefixes
- Aspect and tense
- Word-formation mechanisms
- Linking vowels
- The case system and its uses
- Word order

Appendices include the formation of irregular verbs, complete noun declensions and irregular noun patterns.

With numerous language examples bringing grammar to life, this truly essential reference work will prove invaluable to all students looking to master the patterns and irregularities of modern Hungarian.

Carol Rounds lectures in Hungarian at Columbia University, New York.
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By István Kenesei, Robert M Vago and Anna Fenyvesi
Hungarian

An Essential Grammar

Carol Rounds
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      kell, akar, tud, lehet, szokott, tetszik, fog
This book is designed for all students of Hungarian – but perhaps especially for those who have been told it is too hard to learn. College students, business men and women, people of Hungarian heritage or spouses of Hungarians can use this book as an anchor in their quest to master the intricacies of Hungarian.

The Hungarian language is complex, wonderfully expressive and like no other language you know. This book guides you through the patterns of building words, phrases and sentences with clear explanations and paradigms. What at first seems complex to the Hungarian student becomes a regular and predictable – and therefore a learnable – pattern used to inspire your own Hungarian expression. Have fun with it!
I would like to thank the people who have helped greatly in writing this book. I must begin by expressing my appreciation and great respect for my first Hungarian teacher, Daniel Abondolo, who taught me to look most systematically at this language and thereby help make it learnable; I also thank him for his helpful comments on the manuscript. I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Erika Sólyom for her painstaking reading of the Hungarian examples and suggestions for improvement. I also thank Sophie Oliver at Routledge for her help and patience in seeing the project through. Finally, my greatest thanks are offered to my husband, John Schiemann, for his meticulous editorial comments, and numerous re-readings of the manuscript during the months of its preparation.
Abbreviations

abl. ablative
acc. accusative
adess. adessive
all. allative
caus.-fin. causal-final
dat. dative
delat. delative
def. definite
distr. distributive
elat. elative
ess.-for. essive-formal
illat. illative
indef. indefinite
iness. inessive
instr. instrumental
intrans. intransitive
lit. literal(ly)
nom. nominative
part. participle
pl. plural
pl1 first person plural
pl2 second person plural
pl3 third person plural
poss. possessive
pres. present
relat. relative
s1 first person singular
s2 second person singular
s3 third person singular
sg. singular
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviations</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sociat.</td>
<td>sociative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sublat.</td>
<td>sublative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superess.</td>
<td>superessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sy</td>
<td>somebody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>term.</td>
<td>terminative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transl.</td>
<td>transative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART I

Alphabet, pronunciation and vowel harmony
Hungarian uses the Roman alphabet in addition to some diacritics placed over some vowels. The accent mark(s) above the vowels indicate that the vowel is ‘long’ – see the pronunciation section to follow. Some consonants are digraphs, i.e., they consist of two letters; one consonant (dzs) is a trigraph. Although they are written with more than one letter, digraphs (and the trigraph) are each individual letters of the alphabet.

a á b c cs d dz dzs e é f g gy h i í j k l ly m n
ny o ó ö ŏ p (q) r s sz t ty u ú ü ű v (w) (x) (y) z zs

Unless found in the spellings of foreign words, the letters q, w and x are not used; the letter y is found only in old spellings (pronounced as the letter i) and in digraphs.
Chapter 2

Pronunciation

2.1 Consonants

2.1.1

Many of the consonants in Hungarian are pronounced as in English. All consonants are pronounced – there are no silent letters. The following are the consonants pronounced differently from those in English.

- **c** as in cats  
  **cukor** ‘sugar’  
  **ecet** ‘vinegar’

- **cs** as in church  
  **bocsánat** ‘excuse me’  
  **csal** ‘deceive’

- **g** (always hard) as in go  
  **igen** ‘yes’  
  **gaz** ‘weed’

- **j** as in yes  
  **jó** ‘good’  
  **fáj** ‘hurt’

- **r** trill the tongue on the top of the mouth  
  **kérem** ‘please’  
  **ró** ‘carve’

- **s** as in she  
  **este** ‘evening’  
  **sárga** ‘yellow’

- **sz** as in sat  
  **szervusz** ‘hi’  
  **asztal** ‘table’

- **zs** as in azure  
  **garázs** ‘garage’  
  **zseb** ‘pocket’

2.1.2 The palatal series

The following four consonants are palatalized, i.e., they are pronounced with the tongue gliding off the top of the palate.

- **gy** similar to a dy sound as in during  
  **magyar** ‘Hungarian’  
  **gyár** ‘factory’
ly as in yes (thus the same as the Hungarian letter j)

ny as in canyon

ty similar to a ty sound as in studio

**2.2 Consonant length**

All consonants can be long or short. Long consonants are written as double consonants and are pronounced approximately twice as long as short ones. Great care should be paid to differences in length; it can change the meaning of a word, e.g.,

*szerejem* I love him/her vs. *szerettem* I loved him/her

Length of digraphs is indicated by doubling the first consonant of the digraph. For example, a long sz is written ssz: vissza ‘back’; long ny is written nny: lánnyal ‘with a girl’, etc.

### 2.2.1 Lengthening of consonants before j

The consonants d, gy, t, ty, n, ny are pronounced long when preceding the letter j (though this is not represented in the orthography):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant</th>
<th>Short Form</th>
<th>Long Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ad + ja</td>
<td>adj</td>
<td>[addja]</td>
<td>s/he gives it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hagy + ja</td>
<td>hagyja</td>
<td>[haddja]</td>
<td>s/he leaves it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutat + ja</td>
<td>mutatja</td>
<td>[mutattja]</td>
<td>s/he shows it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>báty + ja</td>
<td>bátyja</td>
<td>[báttja]</td>
<td>his/her brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kíván + juk</td>
<td>kívánjuk</td>
<td>[kivánnjuk]</td>
<td>we wish it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>any + ja</td>
<td>anyja</td>
<td>[annja]</td>
<td>his/her mother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2.3 Voicing and devoicing of consonants**

Consonants can be classified as voiced and unvoiced. The following are the voiced and unvoiced consonants of Hungarian:
2.3.1 Voicing of unvoiced consonants

Unvoiced consonants (except h) become voiced when preceding voiced consonants (except j, ly, m, n, ny, l, r, v). Some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unvoiced</th>
<th>Voiced</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>→ b</td>
<td>népdal [nébdal] folk song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>→ d</td>
<td>kertben [kerdben] in the garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>→ g</td>
<td>lakbér [lagbér] rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>→ zs</td>
<td>kisgyerek [kizgyerek] (small) child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>→ dz</td>
<td>ketrecbe [ketredzbe] into the cage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cs</td>
<td>→ dzs</td>
<td>bográcsgulyás [bográdzgulyás] kettle goulash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sz</td>
<td>→ z</td>
<td>részben [rézben] in part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>→ v</td>
<td>kuglófban [kuglóvban] in (a) cake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.2 Devoicing of voiced consonants

Voiced consonants (except j, ly, m, n, ny, l, r) are devoiced when preceding unvoiced consonants. Some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voiced</th>
<th>Unvoiced</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>→ p</td>
<td>zsebkendő [zsepkendő] handkerchief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>→ t</td>
<td>tudtok [tuttok] you (pl.) know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>→ k</td>
<td>megszeret [mekszerej] (start to) like/love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>→ f</td>
<td>nyelvtan [nyelftan] grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>→ sz</td>
<td>dolgoztok [dolgosztok] you (pl.) work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zs</td>
<td>→ s</td>
<td>varázspálca [varáspálca] magic wand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hissing sibilants (sz, z) when preceding hushing sibilants (s, zs) become hushing sibilants (the above voicing and devoicing rules also apply if applicable).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hissing</th>
<th>Hushing</th>
<th>Becomes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sz</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>ss</td>
<td>egészség [egésség]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>ss</td>
<td>igazság [igasság]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sz</td>
<td>zs</td>
<td>zzs</td>
<td>horgászzsinór [horgázsszinór]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>fishing line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>zs</td>
<td>tíz</td>
<td>tízzsinór [tízzsinór]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>zsinór</td>
<td>ten lines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5 Vowels

Vowels can also be either long or short. Length in the vowels is marked by long marks over the vowel and long vowels are pronounced approximately twice as long as short ones. For two sets of vowel pairs, a ~ á and e ~ é there is a difference not only in length but of quality in the vowel as well. For all other vowel pairs the difference between them is primarily of length.

Hungarian has no diphthongs, i.e., each vowel is pronounced separately.

- **a** aw as in ‘awl’     nap day
- **á** aa as in ‘baa’     ár price
- **e** a sound between the a in ‘bat’ and the e in ‘bet’ reggel morning
- **é** ay as in ‘say’, but without the y-sound (diphthong) at the end kérem please
Pronunciation

- **i** e as in ‘he’
- **í** a longer version of the above, as the **ee** in ‘green’
- **o** oh as in ‘note’
- **ó** a longer version of the above
- **ö** purse your lips as though to say **oh** but say **eh**
- **ő** a longer version of the above
- **u** oo as in ‘food’
- **ú** a longer version of the above
- **ü** purse your lips as though to say **oo** but say **ee**
- **ű** a longer version of the above

**mi** what
**tíz** ten
**kívánok** I wish
**jó** good
**kőszönöm** thank you
**hétfő** Monday
**tud** know
**út** road
**üveg** bottle
**egyszerű** simple

### 2.6 Stress

The first syllable of every word is stressed.

Unless otherwise emphasized, the articles **a**, **az**, **egy**, and the particle **is** receive no stress. Thus in the following phrase, the only stressed element is the first syllable of **kutya**:

```
  a kutya is the dog too
```

### 2.7 Intonation

#### 2.7.1

Hungarian declarative sentences have a primarily descending intonation:

```
  Szép idő van. The weather is beautiful.
```
A question containing a question word has a higher rise on the question word:

\[ \text{Milyen idő van?} \quad \text{What is the weather like?} \]

A yes–no question has a rise–fall intonation where a high rise in intonation is found on the penultimate syllable of the sentence, a sharp fall is on the last syllable.

\[ \text{Szép idő van?} \quad \text{Is the weather nice?} \]

(Note here that intonation may be the only way to differentiate between declarative and interrogative sentences.)

In yes–no questions with fewer than three syllables, the rise in intonation takes place on the final syllable followed by an immediate drop:

\[ \text{Ez az?} \quad \text{Is this it?} \]
\[ \text{Kedves?} \quad \text{Is she nice?} \]
Hungarian vowels are classified according to front vs. back assonance and rounded vs. unrounded. These terms come from describing the tongue position in the mouth and the roundedness of the lips, respectively. The following is the vowel inventory of Hungarian:

- **Back vowels:** a, á, o, ó, u, ú
- **Front unrounded vowels:** e, é, i, í
- **Front rounded vowels:** ö, õ, ű, ū

Vowel harmony rules in Hungarian require that front or back assonance in the vowels of a stem be maintained throughout the entire word, thus for the most part – except for recent loan words – Hungarian words have either only back vowels in them or only front vowels.

### 3.1 Suffixing and back vs. front vowels

Because vowel assonance is maintained throughout the whole word, most suffixes have front and back vowel variants, e.g., the dative case -nak (back vowel) and -nek (front vowel). Thus, if a stem contains back vowels, it affixes back vowel suffixes; should the word contain only front vowels it can affix only front vowel suffixes.

### 3.2 Suffixing and rounded vs. unrounded vowels

When words contain only front vowels, a second distinction in vowel type may be necessary: the rounded/unrounded distinction in the last vowel requires a second stage in vowel harmony rules: if the stem’s last vowel is front and rounded it takes a suffix with a front rounded vowel.
If the stem’s last vowel is front and unrounded, it takes a front unrounded suffix. Although suffixes for most words have front/back vowel variants only a few endings have rounded/unrounded variants (examples include the allative case, -hoz/-hez/-höz, or the plural suffix, -ok/-ek/-ök).

### 3.3 Neutral vowels

Finally, the front unrounded vowels, i, í, e and é, may occur in stems containing either front or back vowels. As such they are considered neutral with respect to vowel harmony rules; a word containing back vowels and neutral vowels is considered a back vowel word. If only neutral vowels occur in a stem, however, the stem is considered to be of front vowel assonance and will require front vowel suffixes.¹

### 3.4 Application of the rules of vowel harmony

To show how vowel harmony works, we will use the plural suffix, which has both front/back vowel harmony and the rounded/unrounded distinction. The plural ending is either -ok (back), -ek (front and unrounded), or -ök (front and rounded).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem</th>
<th>Description of stem</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>asztal</td>
<td>table</td>
<td>asztalok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gyerek</td>
<td>child</td>
<td>gyerekek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>füzet</td>
<td>notebook</td>
<td>füzetek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ismerős</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>ismerősök</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>papír</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>papírok</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ This is particularly true for nouns although there are numerous exceptions; most verbs, however, that contain only the vowel i or í have back vowel assonance. Compare: szív ‘heart’ is a noun with front vowel assonance and szív ‘inhale’ is a verb with back vowel assonance.
Chapter 4

Verbs

The Hungarian conjugation includes the past and present indicative, the subjunctive (also used for the imperative) and conditional moods. There is no inflectional passive mood or future tense; the passive is expressed by means of other constructions with no agency, the future is expressed by the use of coverbs and/or the auxiliary verb fog.

Conjugation of verbs includes the suffixing of tense or mood and personal endings. The personal endings indicate the subject and may indicate the presence of a direct object (see section 4.2). With few exceptions, the rules of vowel harmony extend through the conjugations.

This chapter first illustrates the verb stem types of Hungarian followed by the conjugations and usage of the tenses and moods. The formation and usage of the non-finite forms (particples and the infinitive) as well as the highly productive verbal suffixes of modality (potential, causative, and frequentative) follow. For more on verbal derivational suffixes, see chapter 12 on word formation.

Verbal prefixes, henceforth referred to as coverbs, cause a particular problem for students of Hungarian; the end of this chapter contains extensive descriptions of the common uses of the most frequently used coverbs. Although some reference is made in this chapter to the order of verbs and coverbs in the sections on usage, refer to chapter 16 for a more complete explanation of Hungarian word order.

4.1 Verb stems

In general, Hungarian verb stems are identical with the third person singular present tense indefinite form. This is the citation form found in good dictionaries.
The shape of the verb stem determines in part the shape of the suffix which attaches to it. For most verbs, the verb stem remains the same throughout the conjugations. Some important exceptions are discussed in this section.

4.1.1 -ik verbs

A very large group of verbs end in -ik in the third person singular present tense indefinite conjugation (and as such, appear as the citation form). The verb stem for -ik verbs is found by removing the -ik ending; the verbs then conjugate on the -ik-less stem. For example, the verb utazik 'travel' has the stem utaz- to which the verbal endings attach, e.g., utazni 'to travel (infinitive)'.

In addition to the stem change, -ik verbs also display a regular alternation in the personal endings of some conjugations. In the present tense, the ending -om/-em/-öm may be used for the first person singular indefinite conjugation instead of the regular ending (-ok/-ek/-ök).¹ A similar alternation is found in the first person singular in the subjunctive and conditional paradigms as well, though in these conjugations the regular endings have all but replaced the now archaic -ik endings.

regular ending ~ -ik ending

Present tense: utazom ~ utazok I travel
Subjunctive: utazzam ~ utazzak that I travel
Conditional: utaznám ~ utaznék I would travel

In the subjunctive and conditional conjugations there is also a separate ending for -ik verbs in the indefinite conjugation for third person singular: -ék. This ending is also considered a more archaic form, and is rarely used in speech.

-ik ending ~ regular ending

Subjunctive: utazzék ~ utazzon that he/she play piano
Conditional: utaznék ~ utazna he/she would play piano

¹ Much variation is found in the use of the first person endings of -ik verbs; this is dependent not only on the idiolect of the speaker, but the verb as well – some verbs are prone to take the -ik verb endings, some to take the regular. However, the -om/-em/-öm endings are always correct, if not always colloquial.
4.1.2 *Fleeting vowel stems*

In this large class of verb stems the last vowel is omitted when vowel-initial suffixes are added, yielding a stem-final consonant cluster. Although you cannot tell by its shape whether a verb is a fleeting vowel stem, a pattern emerges with familiarity. In all cases\(^2\) the vowel which elides is o/e/ö; at least one of the consonants in the resulting cluster is always j, l, ly, r, n, ny, m, z, or zs.

The vowel is omitted only when the suffix attached begins with a vowel, thus there are no tri-consonantal clusters. Vowel-initial suffixes are found in the present and past tense conjugations as well as with present and past participles, and the noun-forming suffixes -át/-et and -ás/-és. The presence of a vowel-initial suffix does not always trigger vowel elision and, in fact, the absence of a consistent trigger is what makes this group of stems so irregular. Only the present participle -ó/-ő will consistently trigger the omission of the fleeting vowel.

**mosolyog ~ mosolyg-**

| mosolyognak | they smile | mosolyogta | I smiled |
| mosolyogni | to smile | mosolygott | he/she smiled |
| mosolygok | I smile | mosolygot | smiling (pres. part.) |
| mosolygót | mosolygott | he/she smiled |

**érez ~ érz-**

| éreztem | I felt (it) | érezzük | we feel it | érezni | to feel |
| érzem | I feel it | érzitek | you (pl.) feel it | érzés | feeling |

**üdvözöl ~ üdvözl-**

| üdvözölsz | you (sg.) greet | üdvözöltek | they greeted (us) |
| üdvözlöni | to greet | üdvözölt | they greet him/her |
| üdvözölm | I greet him/her | üdvözlik | they greet him/her |
| üdvözlet | greeting | | |

---

\(^2\) With the one exception of őriz ‘guard’.
This is a small class of verbs whose third person singular form ends in a vowel, but requires a \textit{v}-stem before suffixes beginning with a vowel.

The \textit{v}-stem verbs are: \textit{fő} cook \textit{nő} grow \textit{ró} carve \textit{lő} shoot \textit{nyű} wear out \textit{sző} weave

With the exception of \textit{nyű}, the final vowel is shortened before the \textit{v}: \textit{ró}: rov- `carve’. The present tense paradigm illustrates the pattern of \textit{v}-stem verbs:

\begin{tabular}{llllll}
\textit{sző} & \textit{szöv} & indefinite & definite & \textit{ró} & \textit{rov} & indefinite & definite \\
én & szövök & szövöm & rovok & rovom \\
te & szősz & szővőd & rósz & rovod \\
ő & sző & szövi & ró & rója \\
mi & szövünk & szőjük & rovunk & rójuk \\
ti & szőtök & szővitek & rótok & rójátok \\
ők & szőnek & szővik & rónak & róják
\end{tabular}

The following are the verb stems for the past, subjunctive and conditional as well as the non-finite verb forms for this class. (Note the deviation from the stem for the definite subjunctive \textit{te} form.)

\begin{tabular}{llllllll}
\textit{past tense} & \textit{subjunctive} & \textit{conditional} & \textit{present} & \textit{infinitive} & \textit{adverbial} \\
stem & stem & s2def & stem & participle & participle \\
főtt- & főj- & — & fő- & fövő & főni & főve \\
lőtt- & lőj- & lődd & lő- & lövő & lőni & lőve \\
nőtt- & nőj- & nődd & nő- & növő & nőni & nőve \\
nyűtt- & nyűj- & nyűdd & nyű- & nyűvő & nyűni & nyűve \\
rótt- & rój- & ródd & ró- & rovő & róni & róva \\
\end{tabular}
-szik stems

Another class of verbs ends in -szik in the citation form. If a vowel precedes the -szik ending the verb conjugates normally. (Two exceptions are esküszik ‘swear’ and alkuszik ‘bargain’, to be discussed below.) If, however, a consonant precedes the -szik ending, the -sz of this ending alternates with other consonants throughout the verbal paradigm. The -szik verbs can be divided into four main groups, depending on which consonants -sz- alternates with.

(a) sz ~ d ~ v: This group include some very common verbs. There is considerable variation within this group; note in the following table the stem variants for the potential, causative and adverbial participles. The verbs alszik ‘sleep’ and fekszik ‘lie’ use the short form for the past tense, the rest of the verbs in this group use the long form.

The sz ~ d ~ v alternation is also found with five frequentative verbs having the present tense forms ending in -kodik/-kedik alternating with -szik. The present tense conjugation may occur in either stem variant; the other verb forms conform to the pattern established in the table for cselekszík ~ cselekedik.

- cselekszík ~ cselekedik do, act
- dicsekszik ~ dicsekedik boast
- gyanakszik ~ gyanakodik suspect
- növekszík ~ növekedik grow, increase
- törekszík ~ törekedik strive, try

(b) sz ~ d: This alternation is found in a number of verbs including:

- dulakszik ~ dulakodik grapple, wrestle
- furakszik ~ furakodik push through
- gazdagszik ~ gazdagodik become rich
- gyarapszik ~ gyarapodik increase

Exceptions are hallatszik ‘be heard’, játszik ‘play’, látszik ‘appear’, and tetszik ‘be pleasing’ which do not have variable stems and conjugate regularly. The verb alapszik ‘found’, ‘establish’ is found only in the present tense and conjugates regularly. All other verb forms of alapszik require the synonymous verb (root) alapul.
lerészegszik ~ lerészegedik become drunk
megelégszik ~ megelégedik be satisfied
meghidegszik ~ meghidegedik grow cold
melegszik ~ melegedik become warm
megbetegszik ~ megbetegedik become ill
mosakszik ~ mosakodik wash oneself
öregszik ~ öregedik become old, age
tanakszik ~ tanakodik reflect, consider (tanakszik variant is rare)
telepszik ~ telepedik settle
tolakszik ~ tolakodik push oneself through, impose
ülepszik ~ ülepedik settle, deposit
vastagszik ~ vastagodik grow thick
verekszik ~ verekedik fight
veszekszik ~ veszekedik argue, fight
vetekszik ~ vetekedik rival, vie

(c) sz ~ z: This alternation is found in only three verbs:
emlékszik ~ emlékezik remember
gyülekszik ~ gyülekezik assemble, gather
szándékszik ~ szándékozik intend

(d) sz ~ z ~ v: This alternation is found only with the verb igyekszik ~ igyekedik ‘strive’.
### -szik verbs and stem variants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant alteration</th>
<th>Present tense stem</th>
<th>Past tense, subjunctive, conditional, infinitival stem</th>
<th>Present part., potential causative part.</th>
<th>Adverbial part.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>alsz- sleep</td>
<td>alud-</td>
<td>alvó al(ud)hat al(ud)va</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feksz- lie</td>
<td>feküd-</td>
<td>fekvő fek(üd)het fek(üd)ve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sz ~ d ~ v</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>esküsz- swear</td>
<td>esküd-</td>
<td>esküvő esküdhet esküdve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haragsz- be angry</td>
<td>haragud-</td>
<td>haragvó haragudhat haragudva</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyugsz- be calm</td>
<td>nyugud-</td>
<td>nyugvó nyug(od)hat nyugodva</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alkusz- bargain</td>
<td>alkud-</td>
<td>alkuvó alkudhat alkudva</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cseleksz- do, act</td>
<td>cseleked-</td>
<td>cselekvő cselekedhat cselekedve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cseleked-</td>
<td></td>
<td>cselekedett cselekedtet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öregsz- grow old</td>
<td>öreged-</td>
<td>öregedő öregedhat öregedve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sz ~ d</td>
<td>veszeksz-</td>
<td>veszekedő veszekedhat veszekedve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mosaksz- wash</td>
<td>mosakod-</td>
<td>mosakodó mosakodhat mosakodva</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sz ~ z</td>
<td>emléksz-</td>
<td>emlékező emlékezhet emlékezve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sz ~ z ~ v</td>
<td>igyeksz-</td>
<td>igyekvő igyekezhet igyekezve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strive</td>
<td></td>
<td>igyekeztet igyekeztet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.5 *The group of seven: lesz, tesz, vesz, hisz, visz, eszik, iszik*

This finite class of verbs exhibits a present tense -sz-stem which alternates with other consonants throughout the paradigms as illustrated in the following table. The personal endings for the tenses and moods attach regularly to the verb stems indicated by a dash; forms with no dash are complete second person singular forms; other exceptions are indicated. Full paradigms of these verbs are given in appendix 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The group of seven</th>
<th>Present tense stem</th>
<th>Past tense stem</th>
<th>Subjunctive stem</th>
<th>Conditional stem</th>
<th>Infinitive stem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>lesz</strong></td>
<td>lesz-</td>
<td>lett-</td>
<td>legy-</td>
<td>len-</td>
<td>lenni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will be;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>become</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tesz</strong></td>
<td>tesz-</td>
<td>tett-</td>
<td>tegy-</td>
<td>ten-</td>
<td>tenni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>put; do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>vesz</strong></td>
<td>vesz-</td>
<td>vett-</td>
<td>vegy-</td>
<td>ven-</td>
<td>venni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take; buy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>visz</strong></td>
<td>visz-</td>
<td>vitt-</td>
<td>vigy-</td>
<td>vin-</td>
<td>vinni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take, carry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>hisz</strong></td>
<td>hisz-</td>
<td>hitt-</td>
<td>higgy-</td>
<td>hin-</td>
<td>hinni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>iszik</strong></td>
<td>isz-</td>
<td>itt-</td>
<td>igy-</td>
<td>in-</td>
<td>inni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drink</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>eszik</strong></td>
<td>esz-</td>
<td>ett-</td>
<td>egy-</td>
<td>en-</td>
<td>enni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 There is a good deal of variation (in vowel length and stem shape) throughout the subjunctive paradigm for these verbs. See the full paradigm in appendix 1.

5 The third person singular indefinite past tense of these verbs is formed from a
The verbs van ‘be’, jön ‘go’, and megy ‘come’

These three verbs are irregular in all moods and tenses. The past tense and conditional are formed regularly from the stems indicated in the table. The present tense and subjunctive forms exhibit some variation in the stems; for full paradigms see appendix 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Present tense stem(s)</th>
<th>Past tense stem</th>
<th>Subjunctive stem</th>
<th>Conditional stem</th>
<th>Infinitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>van</td>
<td>vagy-</td>
<td>volt-</td>
<td>legy-</td>
<td>vol-</td>
<td>lenni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>van(-)</td>
<td></td>
<td>légy</td>
<td>len-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jön</td>
<td>varied</td>
<td>jött-</td>
<td>jöjj-</td>
<td>jön-</td>
<td>jönni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>come</td>
<td>gyere</td>
<td></td>
<td>gyertek</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gyerünk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>megy-</td>
<td>ment-</td>
<td>menj-</td>
<td>men-</td>
<td>menni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>go</td>
<td>men-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definite and indefinite conjugations

For each mood and tense, Hungarian verbs have two conjugations. The definite conjugation is used if the sentence contains a definite direct object. The indefinite conjugation is used at all other times. Thus, in the translation of the sentences ‘I see a house’ and ‘I see the house’ the verb lát is conjugated differently because of the presence or absence of a definite direct object.

Látok egy házat.  I see a house.
Látom a házat.    I see the house.

v-stem and is given here in full. The rest of the past tense conjugates regularly from the itt- and ett- stems.
4.2.1 Determining the definiteness of an object

Several factors go into determining whether a direct object is to be considered definite. If a direct object does not conform to one of the points below, or if there is no direct object in the sentence at all, the indefinite conjugation of the verb is used. A direct object is considered definite if:

(a) it is preceded by the definite article a or az.

Látom a házat. I see the house.

(b) it is a demonstrative pronoun (az or ez, azok or ezek) or is modified by a demonstrative pronoun.6

Látom ezt/azt. I see this/that.

Látom ezt/azt a házat. I see this/that house.

The demonstrative pronouns are also frequently used cataphorically7 and as such they may be overt or implied. In either instance, they are still considered definite.

(Azt) látom, hogy esik az eső. I see that it is raining.

(c) it has a possessive suffix.

Látom a házadat. I see your house.

Látom a házát. I see his/her house.

Since a possessed noun is almost always preceded by a definite article, this may also be considered a sub-class of (a). Although the definite article may be omitted in possessive constructions, any direct object with a possessive suffix is still considered definite. Note, also, that possessive and reflexive pronouns contain possessive suffixes and they are also considered definite.

Látom magam(at). I see myself.

Mutasd meg a tiedet! Show me yours!

---

6 A contextually frequent, though semantically singular, exception to this is found when the direct object azt has the meaning ‘that kind of’, ‘such a’; in this case, the indefinite conjugation is used:

Azt kérék. I would like that kind.

7 See section 7.9 for discussion of cataphoric pronouns.
(d) it is a proper noun.

Látom Zsuzsát/Budapestet. I see Zsuzsa/Budapest.

(e) it is a third person pronoun (overt or implied).

Látom (őt). I see him/her.
Látom (őket). I see them.
Látom (magát). I see you (singular, polite).
Látom (magukat). I see you (plural, polite).
Látom (önt). I see you (singular, very polite).
Látom (önöket). I see you (plural, very polite).

The third person direct object pronoun need not be overtly expressed and therefore the sentence Látom can mean ‘I see him/her/them/you’ (formal forms, sg. and pl.) – only context will provide the correct meaning. (It is common in speech, however, to overtly express the third person plural pronoun őket ‘them’ even when the context is otherwise clear.)

(f) it is the reciprocal pronoun, egymás.

Látják egymást. They see each other.

(g) it is a modifier ending in -ik, or is preceded by a modifier ending in -ik (e.g. melyik, hányadik).

Melyiket kéred? Which one would you like?
Melyik könyvet kéred? Which book would you like?

4.2.2  -lak/-lek

There is one more personal form in all moods and tenses we shall include here in the definite conjugations (though not because the object is inherently definite). A unique verb conjugational form (-lak/-lek) exists for verbs when the subject is én and direct object is a second person pronoun (téged, titeket, benneteket). With any subject other than én, however, second person objects occur with indefinite conjugations.

Látlak (téged). I see you (singular, familiar).
Látlak (benneteket/titeket). I see you (plural, familiar).
4.3 Conjugation and usage

4.3.1 Present tense: conjugation

The present tense (unlike the past and the other moods) has no marker of its own on the verb; personal endings are added directly to the stem.

4.3.1.1 Indefinite conjugation

As illustrated in the following table, the personal endings for the present tense indefinite conjugation have either two or three vowel choices dependent on vowel harmony. Verb stems ending in two vowels or a long vowel plus -t require a linking vowel before the endings that begin with a consonant. Finally, for verb stems ending in the sibilants s, sz, z, dz, the personal ending for te is -ol/-el/-öl instead of the -sz found for non-sibilant stems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present tense indefinite – personal endings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1st person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>én</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ik verbs (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2nd person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after two consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or long vowel + t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after s, sz, z, dz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3rd person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŏ, maga, ön</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ik verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plural</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2nd person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after two consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or long vowel + t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3rd person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŏk, maguk, önök</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after two consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or long vowel + t</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Due to their different shapes, the following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Conjugation</th>
<th>Trigger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wait</td>
<td>vár</td>
<td>[back vowel]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask for</td>
<td>kér</td>
<td>[front unrounded vowel]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>translate</td>
<td>fordít</td>
<td>[back vowel ending in long vowel + t]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cook</td>
<td>főz</td>
<td>[front rounded vowel ending in a sibilant]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>play</td>
<td>játszik</td>
<td>[back vowel -ik verb with a stem ending in two consonants; the stem-final consonant is a sibilant]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Present tense indefinite conjugations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>vár</th>
<th>kér</th>
<th>fordít</th>
<th>főz</th>
<th>játszik</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>én</td>
<td>várok</td>
<td>kérek</td>
<td>fordítok</td>
<td>főzök</td>
<td>játszok (≈ játszom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te</td>
<td>vársz</td>
<td>kérsz</td>
<td>fordítasz</td>
<td>főzöl</td>
<td>játszol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ő</td>
<td>vár</td>
<td>kér</td>
<td>fordít</td>
<td>főz</td>
<td>játszík</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi</td>
<td>várnak</td>
<td>kérünk</td>
<td>fordítunk</td>
<td>főzünk</td>
<td>játszunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti</td>
<td>vártok</td>
<td>kértek</td>
<td>fordítotok</td>
<td>főztök</td>
<td>játszotok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ők</td>
<td>várnak</td>
<td>kérnek</td>
<td>fordítanak</td>
<td>főznek</td>
<td>játszanak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Present tense definite conjugation

In addition to observing vowel harmony rules, the personal endings of the present tense definite conjugation are subject to another phonological rule: the -j- of the j-initial endings (-ja, -juk/-jük, -játok, -ják) regularly assimilates to the final consonant of verb stems ending in a sibilant (s, sz, z, dz). Recall from chapter 1 that when digraphs (sz, dz, etc.) are long, i.e., doubled, they are written by doubling only the first letter of the digraph: sz + sz → ssz.

- **olvas** + ja → **olvassa**  s/he reads (it)
- **vesz** + jük → **vesszük**  we take (it)
- **hoz** + játok → **hozzátok** you (pl.) bring (it)
- **edz** + jük → **eddzük**  we train him/her
### Present tense definite – personal endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Back vowel</th>
<th>Front vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unrounded</td>
<td>rounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person én</td>
<td>-om</td>
<td>-em</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person te</td>
<td>-od</td>
<td>-ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person ō, maga, ön</td>
<td>-ja</td>
<td>-i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person ti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person ōk, maguk, önök</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person singular subject with 2nd person object after two consonants or long vowel + t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

- **give**  ad  [back vowel]
- **read**  olvas  [back vowel, ends in sibilant]
- **play**  játszik  [back vowel, ends in sibilant, -ik verb]
- **ask for**  kér  [front unrounded vowel]
- **cook**  főz  [front rounded vowel, ends in sibilant]
The form for verbs with the subject én ‘I’ and direct object téged, titeket, benneteket ‘you’ (familiar, sg. or pl.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Present Tense</th>
<th>Present Participle</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vár</td>
<td>várjak</td>
<td>várjak</td>
<td>I wait for you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>szeret</td>
<td>szeretlek</td>
<td>szeretlek</td>
<td>I love you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tart</td>
<td>tartalak</td>
<td>tartalak</td>
<td>I hold you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ért</td>
<td>értelek</td>
<td>értelek</td>
<td>I understand you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.3.2 Present tense: usage**

**4.3.2.1**

The present tense can be used to indicate both present and habitual actions.

- **Sétálunk a parkban.** We are walking in the park.
- **Mari nagy cégnél dolgozik.** Mari works for a large firm.
- **Minden nap bemegyek a városba.** I go into the city every day.

**4.3.2.2**

The present tense may also be used to indicate future actions. In many instances coverbs and/or time expressions indicating a future date are
used with the present tense of the verb to express the future. (See section 4.6.3 on aspect and coverbs for more on the use of aspect to indicate future.)

**Holnap egész nap dolgozom.** I will be working all day tomorrow.

**Jövő héten lemegyek a Balatonra.** Next week I’m going to the Balaton.

**Később írom meg házi feladatomat.** I’ll do my homework later.

4.3.2.3

The present tense is often used in colloquial Hungarian when relating a story that happened in the past. This is found in very colloquial English as well.

*Bemegyek a boltba, és kit látok? Egyik amerikai barátomat, aki rögtön elkezd belni mesél, hogy mi történik vele, amióta nem láttuk egymást.*

*I go into the store, and who do I see? An American friend, who immediately begins to tell me what has been going on with him since we last met.*

4.3.2.4

Reported speech: In English reported speech tolerates both the past and present tense, for example, ‘You said that you were/are (still) reading.’ In Hungarian, on the other hand, reported speech is expressed in the tense in which it was originally stated.

**Lajos mondta, hogy Szegeden akar lakni.**
Lajos said that he wants/wanted to live in Szeged. (At the time of his statement he used the present tense.)

**Lajos mondta, hogy három évvel ezelőtt Szegeden akart lakni.**
Lajos said that three years ago he wanted to live in Szeged. (At the time of his statement, he used the past tense.)
The present tense is used in time expressions meaning ‘since’, ‘for a period of time’ if the action continues into the present.

Január óta dolgozom a könyvtárban.
I have been working in the library since January.

Mióta tanulsz magyarul?
How long have you been studying Hungarian?

**Past tense: conjugation**

The past tense marker appears between the verb stem and the personal endings. It has two shapes: (1) the long form, -ott/-ett/-ött (where the vowel alternation is dependent on vowel harmony rules) and (2) the short form, -t. The shape of the verb stem determines whether it will take the long or short form. Three classes of verb stems are pertinent:

Class A verbs always require the long form -ott/-ett/-ött and are defined as follows:

1. verbs ending in a long vowel + t
2. verbs ending in two consonants
3. monosyllabic verbs ending in a short vowel + t. Only eight verbs in the language have such a shape:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fut</td>
<td>run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hat</td>
<td>have an effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jut</td>
<td>get, come to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>köt</td>
<td>tie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyit</td>
<td>open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>süt</td>
<td>bake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>üt</td>
<td>strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vet</td>
<td>cast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class B verbs always require the short form t and are defined as follows:

1. verbs ending in (single) j, l, ly, n, ny, or r.
2. many bisyllabic verbs ending in -ad or -ed.

Class C verbs require the long form in the third person singular indefinite conjugation and the short form for all other persons. Class C is (negatively) defined as containing all verbs not of class A or class B.
Exceptions:

(a) Some verbs that look as though they belong to Class A but conjugate as Class C include lát ‘see’, küld ‘send’, mond ‘say’, kezd ‘begin’, függ ‘hang’, ‘depend’, fedd ‘reprove’.

(b) Verbs that look as though they belong to Class A but conjugate as Class B are áll ‘stand’, száll ‘fly’, varr ‘sew’, forr ‘boil’.

(c) The verb fürdik ‘bathe’ conjugates as either Class A or C: fürödtem ~ fürdöttem ‘I bathed’, only the long form is used in the third person singular: fürdött ‘she/he bathed’.

### 4.3.3.1 Past tense indefinite

After the correct past tense marker has been determined, the personal endings are attached with no further changes to the stem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past tense indefinite – personal endings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person én</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person te</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person Ő, maga, ön</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plural</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person ti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person Ők, maguk, önök</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

- **bake**  **süt**  [Class A, front rounded vowel]
- **remain**  **marad**  [Class B, back vowel]
- **love**  **szeret**  [Class C, front unrounded vowel]
- **olvas**  **read**  [Class C, back vowel]
### Past tense indefinite conjugations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>süt</th>
<th>marad</th>
<th>szeret</th>
<th>olvas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>én</td>
<td>sütöttem</td>
<td>maradtam</td>
<td>szerettem</td>
<td>olvastam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te</td>
<td>sütöttél</td>
<td>maradtál</td>
<td>szerettél</td>
<td>olvastál</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ő</td>
<td>sütött</td>
<td>maradt</td>
<td>szeretett</td>
<td>olvasott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi</td>
<td>sütöttünk</td>
<td>maradtunk</td>
<td>szerettünk</td>
<td>olvastunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti</td>
<td>sütöttetek</td>
<td>maradtatok</td>
<td>szerettetek</td>
<td>olvastatok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ők</td>
<td>sütöttek</td>
<td>maradtak</td>
<td>szerettek</td>
<td>olvastak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Past tense definite

#### Past tense definite – personal endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Back vowel</th>
<th>Front vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person én</td>
<td>-am</td>
<td>-em</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person te</td>
<td>-ad</td>
<td>-ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person ő, maga, ön</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person mi</td>
<td>-uk</td>
<td>-ük</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person ti</td>
<td>-átok</td>
<td>-étek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person ők, maguk, önök</td>
<td>-ák</td>
<td>-ék</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person singular subject with 2nd person object</td>
<td>-alak</td>
<td>-elek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

- **strike** üt [Class A, front rounded vowel]
- **ask for** kér [Class B, front vowel]
- **introduce** bemutat [Class C, back vowel]
Past tense definite conjugations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>üt</th>
<th>kér</th>
<th>bemutat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>én</td>
<td>ütöttem</td>
<td>kértem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te</td>
<td>ütötted</td>
<td>kérted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ő</td>
<td>ütötte</td>
<td>kérté</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi</td>
<td>ütöttük</td>
<td>kértük</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti</td>
<td>ütöttétek</td>
<td>kértétek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ők</td>
<td>ütötték</td>
<td>kérték</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The form for verbs with the subject én ‘I’ and direct object téged, titeket, benneteket ‘you’ (familiar, sg. or pl.):

- ütöttelek I struck you
- kértelek I asked you
- bemutattalak I introduced you

4.3.4 Past tense: usage

4.3.4.1

The past tense is used, as in English, to express actions that occurred in the past.

- Tegnap bicikliztünk az erdőben. Yesterday we were biking in the woods.
- Múlt évben Franciaországban nyaraltak. They vacationed in France last year.
- Befejeztém a munkát. I finished the work.
Hungarian has only one past tense form. The use of time expressions and coverbs combine to express the meanings of the complex tense forms found in English. See 4.6.3 on aspect and coverbs.

Elolvastam a könyvet. (past tense, with a coverb, only perfective aspect)
I read the book. / I have read the book. / I had read the book.

Olvastam a könyvet. (past tense, without a coverb, imperfective or perfective aspect)
I was reading the book. / I had been reading the book. / I read the book.

The auxiliary verb szokott ‘usually’ is found only in the past tense although its meaning may be either past or present.

Reggel kávézni szoktam, este inkább teázom.
In the morning I usually drink coffee, in the evening I drink tea.

Régen korcsolyázni szoktunk télen, de most már öregek vagyunk.
In the old days we would go ice skating in the winter, but now we are too old.

The past tense may also be used (in compound sentences) to indicate the completion of an action in the future.

Ha megebédeltem, lefekszem egy órára.
When I have finished my lunch, I will lie down for an hour.

Mihelyt megírtam a levelet, rohanok a postára.
As soon as I have written the letter I will rush to the post office.

Subjunctive/imperative: conjugation

The subjunctive serves as the imperative as well and for the sake of brevity will be referred to here only as the subjunctive. Its marker is -j- and it
is located between the verb stem and the personal endings. Depending on the verb stem, the -j- may be assimilated or otherwise altered. The following are the regular alternations of the subjunctive marker -j-:

1. In verb stems ending in a sibilant (s, sz, z, dz), the subjunctive -j- assimilates to the sibilant.\(^8\)
   
   \[ \text{keres} + \text{-j-} \rightarrow \text{keress}- \]

2. In verb stems ending in -st\(^9\) or -szt, the stem-final -t is lost and the subjunctive -j- assimilates to the sibilant.
   
   \[ \text{ébreszt} + \text{-j-} \rightarrow \text{ébressz}- \]

3. In verb stems ending in a long vowel + t or a consonant + t (except as defined in the previous paragraph), the subjunctive -j- becomes -s-.
   
   \[ \text{segít} + \text{-j-} \rightarrow \text{segíts}- \]

4. In verb stems ending in a short vowel + t, both the stem-final -t and the subjunctive -j- become s.
   
   \[ \text{mutat} + \text{-j-} \rightarrow \text{mutass}- \]

The personal endings show some variation in the subjunctive. The second person singular has both a long and short form; although the short form is becoming more common in colloquial speech, the long form expresses a somewhat milder command.

### 4.3.5.1 Subjunctive indefinite

The regular endings are used much more frequently with -ik verbs than the other optional endings found in the first and third persons singular; the optional endings are more archaic and often found in older writings.

---

\(^8\) Compare with the -j initial personal endings in the definite conjugation of the present tense where the same assimilation occurs.

\(^9\) Only one verb ends in -st: fest ‘paint’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjunctive indefinite – personal endings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1st person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>én</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>-ik verbs (optional)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2nd person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3rd person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>-ik verbs (optional)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plural</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1st person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2nd person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3rd person</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

- **ask for** kér [front unrounded vowel]
- **run** fut [back vowel, ends in short vowel + t]
- **wake** ébreszt [front unrounded vowel, ends in -szt]
- **play** játszik [back vowel, -ik verb, stem ends in sibilant]
4.3.5.2 Subjunctive definite

In the definite conjugation, there is both a short and long form for the second person singular ending. The long form is given below in the table. The short form is arrived at by dropping the -j- of the subjunctive (or the consonant to which it had assimilated) and the vowel that follows it. For example,

\[
\text{kér } + \text{j } + \text{ed} \rightarrow \text{kérjed} \quad (\text{long form}) \sim \text{kérd} \quad (\text{short form})
\]

\[
\text{nyit } + \text{j } + \text{ad} \rightarrow \text{nyissad} \quad (\text{long form}) \sim \text{nyisd} \quad (\text{short form})
\]

\[
\text{ébreszt } + \text{j } + \text{ed} \rightarrow \text{ébresszed} \quad (\text{long form}) \sim \text{ébreszd} \quad (\text{short form})
\]

The one regular exception to this pattern is found in verb stems ending in a long vowel + t or a consonant + t (other than st, szt). For verbs of this large class, only the vowel following the subjunctive marker -j- is lost, the subjunctive marker is kept (in this class, the -j- becomes an s). For example,

\[
\text{tart } + \text{j } + \text{ad} \rightarrow \text{tartsad} \quad (\text{long form}) \sim \text{tartsd} \quad (\text{short form})
\]

Except for the short form in the second person singular, the personal endings of the subjunctive definite conjugation are identical to those for the past tense definite conjugation.
The following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

- **wait** vár [back vowel]
- **love** szeret [front unrounded vowel, ends in short vowel + t]
- **hold** tart [back vowel, ends in a consonant + t]
- **frighten** ijeszt [front unrounded vowel, ends in -szt]

### Subjunctive definite conjugations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vár</th>
<th>szeret</th>
<th>tart</th>
<th>ijeszt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>én várjam</td>
<td>szeressem</td>
<td>tartsam</td>
<td>ijesszem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te várjad</td>
<td>szeressed</td>
<td>tartsad</td>
<td>ijesszed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~ várd</td>
<td>~ szeresd</td>
<td>~ tartsd</td>
<td>~ ijeszd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ő várja</td>
<td>szeresse</td>
<td>tartsa</td>
<td>ijessze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi várjuk</td>
<td>szeressük</td>
<td>tartsuk</td>
<td>ijesszük</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti várjátok</td>
<td>szeressétek</td>
<td>tartsátok</td>
<td>ijesszétek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ők várják</td>
<td>szeressék</td>
<td>tartsák</td>
<td>ijesszék</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The form for verbs with the subject én ‘I’ and direct object téged, titeket, benneteket ‘you’ (familiar, sg. or pl.):

- vár  wait  várjalak  that I wait for you
- szeret  love  szeresselek  that I love you
- tart  hold  tartsalak  that I hold you
- ijeszt  frighten  ijesszelek  that I frighten you

### 4.3.6 Subjunctive: usage

The subjunctive conjugation is also used for the imperative, i.e., it is the form used when giving commands. It is also used in several types of subordinate clauses.

#### 4.3.6.1 The subjunctive as imperative

The subjunctive is used to give commands – polite or otherwise. Any coverb is removed to a post-verb position in commands. Imperative sentences always end in an exclamation mark.

- Gyere ide!  Come here!
- Csukja be az ajtót, legyen szíves!  Close the door, please!
- Hívjál fel később!  Call me later!
- Hagyjál békén!  Leave me alone!

When giving commands in the negative, the forms ne, se replace nem, sem, respectively.

- Ne menjen el!  Don’t leave!
- Ne edd meg azt a barackot!  Don’t eat that apricot!
- Senki se zavarjon!  Don’t anyone bother me!

Stricter, more threatening commands can be formed by not removing the coverb (or other adverbial) from the preverb position.

- Megcsináld!  Do it!
- Lassan menjél!  Walk slowly!

Strict negative commands are formed by placing the coverb before the negative particle.
The subjunctive is used in the first person plural to mean ‘let’s’.

- **Együnk már!** (Let’s eat already!)
- **Menjünk moziba!** (Let’s go to the movies!)
- **Ne keljünk fel korán holnap!** (Let’s not get up early tomorrow!)

The subjunctive combines with the frozen form *hadd* ‘let’ to express permission.

- **Hadd maradjon itthon, ha akar!** (Let him stay home if he wants!)
- **Hadd vegyem meg ezt az autót!** (Let me buy this car!)

**4.3.2 Subjunctive and questions**

The subjunctive is used in questions in the first person singular and plural, to express ‘should I/we . . .?’ or ‘shall I/we . . .?’ In this usage, the coverb is not removed from the verb (unless other focus elements are in the clause – see focus and word order chapter 16).

- **Megmondjam nekik az igazat?** (Should I tell them the truth?)
- **Táncoljunk?** (Shall we dance?)

The subjunctive is also used in indirect questions; the meaning is similar to the previous usage, expressing ‘should/shall one . . .?’

- **Megkérdezték, hogy felírják-e az új szavakat.** (They asked whether they should write down the new words.)
- **Megérdeklődted, hogy elinduljál-e?** (Did you inquire as to whether you should leave?)

**4.3.3 Subjunctive and subordinate clauses**

The following are the most common uses of the subjunctive in subordinate clauses. Careful attention must be paid to the position of the coverb.
In subordinate clauses containing requests or commands, the coverb is (usually) removed from the preverb to a post-verb position; in other subordinate clauses the coverb remains in the preverb position.

4.3.6.3.1 Clauses containing indirect requests, commands

If the desire or will of the subject of the main clause is pressed upon the subject of the subordinate clause, the subordinate clause will contain the subjunctive verb. The verb in the main clause may be one of will: *akar* ‘want’, *kér* ‘request’, ‘ask’, *javasol* ‘suggest’, *ajánl* ‘recommend’; or it may be any verb of communication through which a wish is conveyed: *mond* ‘say’, *ír* ‘write’, *üzen* ‘send the message’, etc.

Többen javasolták Lacinak, hogy udvaroljon a szomszéd lánynak.
Several people had suggested to Laci that he date the girl next door.

Azt írták, hogy jöjjek haza.
They wrote me that I should come home.

Azt kérte a feleségétől, hogy szokjon le a dohányzásról.
He asked his wife to give up smoking.

If the main clause contains a prohibitive verb or expression, the subjunctive is used in the subordinate clause. Unless there are other focussed elements, a coverb in the subordinate clause remains in the preverb position.

Megtiltották, hogy elmenjen az országból.
They forbid him from leaving the country.

Nem engedték, hogy felhívjon.
They did not allow him to call me.

4.3.6.3.2 Clauses of purpose

The subjunctive is used to express ‘in order to’ or ‘so that’; this is often combined with a main clause introduced by *azért* ‘for that reason’.

(Azért) megyek Magyarországra, hogy meglátogathassam a rokonaimat.
I am going to Hungary so that I can visit my relatives.

Sokkal többet kell gyakorolnom, hogy igazán jól tudjak zongorázni.
I have to practice much more in order to play the piano really well.
Elviszi a pulóvert, hogy ne fázzon a kiránduláson.
She is taking the sweater so she won’t be cold on the trip.

If the subjunctive clause of purpose is negated, it may begin with *hogy* . . . *ne* or *nehogy*; with *nehogy* the coverb is not removed from the preverb position.

### Vigyázz, nehogy elessél!
Watch out that you don’t fall!

### Vigyázz, hogy ne essél el!
Watch out that you don’t fall!

Another kind of clause of purpose – more subtle than the previous type – is one in which the action in the subordinate clause is a desired or expected result of the main clause:

### Arra törekszik, hogy új állást kapjon.
He’s trying to get a new job.

### Figyelmeztetett arra, hogy ne felejtsem el.
He reminded me so I wouldn’t forget.

### Arra készültünk, hogy két napon belül elutazhassunk.
We were getting ready so that we could leave within two days.

### Felhasználtam az alkalmat arra, hogy elszökjek.
I used the opportunity to get away.

### Sohasem lesz annyi tehetségem ahhoz, hogy három nyelvet beszéljek.
I will never be talented enough to speak three languages.

### 4.3.6.3.3
Subordinate clauses following impersonal main clauses are also in the subjunctive.

### Fontos, hogy elolvassák a cikket.
It is important that they read the article.

### Szükséges, hogy előre telefonáljak?
Is it necessary that I call in advance?

### Illik, hogy pontos legyél.
It is appropriate that you be punctual.
The subjunctive is used in subordinate clauses where the main clause expresses a lack, absence or inability (to fulfill a goal).

**Nincs kivel kártyázzak.**
I have nobody to play cards with.

**Nem volt lehetőségük, hogy bemutatkozzanak az új igazgatónak.**
They had no opportunity to introduce themselves to the new director.

### 4.3.7 The conditional (non-past): conjugation

The conditional marker is

- **-na/-ne** for the third person singular indefinite form;

- **-né** for the first person singular indefinite (i.e., there is no back vowel variant);

- **-ná/-né** for all other persons.

The conditional is located between the verb stem and the personal endings. In verb stems ending in a long vowel + t or two consonants, the linking vowel a/e is required before the conditional marker.

\[
\text{olvas} + \text{né} + k \rightarrow \text{olvasnék} \quad \text{(no linking vowel)}
\]

**BUT**

\[
\text{tanít} + \text{ané} + k \rightarrow \text{tanítanék} \quad \text{(linking vowel a required)}
\]

\[
\text{ért} + \text{ené} + k \rightarrow \text{értenék} \quad \text{(linking vowel e required)}^{11}
\]

### 4.3.7.1 Conditional indefinite

In contrast to all the other conjugations, in this paradigm there is no vowel harmony in the regular first person singular ending. The endings

---

10 Exceptions include áll ‘stand’, száll ‘fly’, varr ‘sew’, and forr ‘boil’. Recall that in the past tense, these verbs also conjugated as those ending in only one consonant.

11 This use of a linking vowel is identical to that found in forming the infinitive of the same verb types.
for -ik verbs are rarely used in colloquial Hungarian. Because of the variations found in vowel length and vowel harmony, the following table combines the conditional and personal markers; thus these endings attach directly to the verb stem.

### Conditional indefinite – personal endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Back vowel</th>
<th>Front vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person én</td>
<td>-nék</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ik verbs (optional)</td>
<td>-nám</td>
<td>-ném</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person te</td>
<td>-nál</td>
<td>-nél</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person Ő, maga, Őn</td>
<td>-na</td>
<td>-ne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ik verbs (optional)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-nék</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plural</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person mi</td>
<td>-nánk</td>
<td>-nénk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person ti</td>
<td>-nátok</td>
<td>-nétek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person Ők, maguk, Őnek</td>
<td>-nának</td>
<td>-nének</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

- **translate** fordít [back vowel, ends in long vowel + t]
- **help** segít [front vowel, ends in long vowel + t]
- **dare** mer [front vowel]
- **swim** úszik [back vowel, -ik verb]
Conditional indefinite conjugations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fordít</th>
<th>segít</th>
<th>mer</th>
<th>úszik</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>én</td>
<td>fordítanék</td>
<td>segítenék</td>
<td>mernék</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te</td>
<td>fordítanál</td>
<td>segítenél</td>
<td>mernél</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ő</td>
<td>fordítana</td>
<td>segítene</td>
<td>merne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi</td>
<td>fordítánánk</td>
<td>segítenénk</td>
<td>mernének</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti</td>
<td>fordítánátok</td>
<td>segítenétek</td>
<td>mernétek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ők</td>
<td>fordítánának</td>
<td>segítenének</td>
<td>mernének</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conditional definite

The personal endings for the definite conjugation exhibit no variation; the first and second person plural endings in the definite conjugation are identical to those in the indefinite conjugation. The following table combines the conditional marker with the personal endings; thus the endings given here attach directly to the verb stem.

Conditional definite – personal endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Back vowel</th>
<th>Front vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person én</td>
<td>-nám</td>
<td>-ném</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person te</td>
<td>-nád</td>
<td>-néd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person ő, maga, ön</td>
<td>-ná</td>
<td>-né</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person mi</td>
<td>-nánk</td>
<td>-nénk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person ti</td>
<td>-nátok</td>
<td>-nétek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person ők</td>
<td>-nák</td>
<td>-nék</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person singular subject with 2nd person object</td>
<td>-nálak</td>
<td>-nélek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following verbs trigger different endings; the relevant triggers are indicated in brackets; their conjugations follow.

- **love** szeret [front vowel]
- **hold** tart [back vowel, ends in two consonants]
- **give** ad [back vowel]

### Conditional definite conjugations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>szeret</th>
<th>tart</th>
<th>ad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>én szeretném</td>
<td>tartanám</td>
<td>adnám</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te szeretnéd</td>
<td>tartanád</td>
<td>adnád</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ō szeretné</td>
<td>tartaná</td>
<td>adná</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi szeretnének</td>
<td>tartanánk</td>
<td>adnánk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti szeretnétek</td>
<td>tartanátok</td>
<td>adnátok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ōk szeretnék</td>
<td>tartanák</td>
<td>adnák</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The form for verbs with the subject én ‘I’ and direct object téged, titeket, benneteket ‘you’ familiar, sg. or pl.:

- **szeretnélek** I would love you.
- **tartanálak** I would hold you.

### 4.3.8 The past conditional

The past conditional is formed simply by conjugating the substantive verb in the past tense and following it with the fixed form volna. An example paradigm is given below where the verb elmegy ‘leave’ is conjugated in the past tense and volna follows it:

- **elmentem volna** I would have left
- **elmentél volna** you (sg.) would have left
- **elment volna** he/she would have left
- **elmentünk volna** we would have left
elmentetek volna  you (pl.) would have left
elmentek volna  they would have left

When negating the past conditional construction, the negative particle is placed immediately before the conjugated verb; the coverb is removed to a position immediately after volna.

Nem mentem volna el.  I would not have gone.
Nem hívott volna fel.  She would not have called us.

Any other stressed or focussed element will change the word order in the same way as negation. (See section 16.4 on word order and focus.)

Kit látogattál volna meg, ha lett volna időd?
Whom would you have visited, if you’d had the time?

Because the formation of the past conditional is based on the past tense forms, full paradigms need not be listed here.

4.3.9  Conditional: usage

4.3.9.1

The conditional is used to express hypothetical conditions in the present, future or past. When used to express ‘if . . . then . . .’ conditions, both clauses are conjugated in the conditional mood.

Ha több időm lenne, akkor többet olvasnék.
If I had more time, then I would read more.

Nagyon örülne, ha meglátogatnád.
She would be very happy if you would visit her.

Azonnal elindulna, ha megtalálná a kulcsát.
He would leave right now if he could find his keys.

4.3.9.2

The conditional is used to make a polite request.

Megkérnélek egy szíves ségre.
I would like to ask you a favor.
Kölcsön adnál egy ezrest?
Would you loan me a thousand forints?

Vennél nekem egy fagyit?
Would you buy me an ice cream?

Lenne egy kérdésem.
I have a question.

Bekapcsolhatnám a tévét?
Might I turn on the television?

4.3.9.3
The conditional is used to express wishes and desires; it is always used after bárcsak ‘if only’.

Bárcsak esne a hó!
If only it would snow!

Szeretném, ha gyakrabban találkozhatnánk.
I wish we could meet more often.

Bár megnézhettem volna én is azt a filmet.
If only I could have seen that film, too.

4.3.9.4
The conditional is used in clauses introduced by the conjunctions anélkül ‘without’, ahelyett ‘instead of’, and mintha ‘as if’.

Anélkül, hogy elbúcsúzott volna tőlünk, hirtelen elhagytat az országot.
Without saying goodbye, he suddenly left the country.

Ahelyett, hogy cukrot tenne a teába, egy kis rumot tett bele.
Instead of putting sugar in the tea, she put some rum in.

Úgy nézel ki, mintha megijesztettek volna!
You look as though you’ve been frightened!
4.3.10 The future tense

4.3.10.1

Although there is no inflectional future tense, future actions can be expressed in a number of ways. The present tense may combine with time expressions and/or coverbs to indicate the future.

**Holnap felhívlak.** I’ll call you tomorrow.

**Jövő télen veszek egy új autót.** Next winter I will buy a new car.

4.3.10.2

The auxiliary verb *fog* is used to express the future tense – primarily with verbs with no coverbs. Word order patterns with *fog* are like those of other auxiliary verbs (see section 16.5 on word order). When used as a future auxiliary, *fog*\(^{12}\) conjugates in the present tense in both definite and indefinite conjugations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>indefinite</th>
<th>definite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pihenni + fog</td>
<td>látni + fog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will rest’</td>
<td>‘will see’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ét</td>
<td>látni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pihenni fogok</td>
<td>fogom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te</td>
<td>fogod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>fogja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi</td>
<td>fogunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti</td>
<td>fogtak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ők</td>
<td>fognak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fogják</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mikor lesz idóm, pihenni fogok.**
When I have time, I am going to rest.

**Mikor fogsz találkozni vele?**
When are you going to meet with her?

\(^{12}\) The verb *fog* has another meaning ‘catch’; in this meaning it conjugates in all moods and tenses.
The verb *fog* also combines with verbs that do have coverbs; in this case, the expression is somewhat more emphatic.

- **Meg fogom várni.** I will wait for him.
- **Ne félj, meg fogja javítani az autót!** Don’t worry, he will fix the car.

### 4.3.10.3

The verb *lesz* ‘will be’, ‘become’ is the future of the verb *van* ‘be’; it is not an auxiliary verb.

- **Ha felnövök, orvos leszek.** I will be a doctor when I grow up.
- **Később éhes leszel, ha nem reggelizel.** You’ll be hungry later if you don’t have breakfast.

Lesz can replace *van* in any construction to express the future.

- ‘have’ construction:
  - **Sohasem lesz elég pénze.** He will never have enough money.
- the verb *van* with adverbial participles:
  - **Egy hét múlva be lesz fejezve a munka.** The work will be finished in a week.

## 4.4 Non-finite forms

### 4.4.1 Past, present, and future participles: formation

#### 4.4.1.1

The present participle is -ó or -ő. It is attached directly to the verb stem in regular verbs. The last vowel of fleeting-vowel verbs always elides and v-stem verbs always use the v-stem before the present participle.

- **ír** write + ó → **író** writer; writing
- **játszik** play + ó → **játszó** player; playing
- **énekel** sing + ő → **éneklő** singer; singing
sző  weave + ō → szövő  weaver; weaving

4.4.1.2

The past participle is usually the same as the third person singular indefinite form of the past tense.

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{ad} & \text{give} \quad \text{adott} \quad \text{given} \\
\text{ismer} & \text{know} \quad \text{ismert} \quad \text{known} \\
\text{kifest} & \text{paint} \quad \text{kifestett} \quad \text{painted}
\end{array}
\]

There are some exceptions in monosyllabic verbs belonging to Class B.\textsuperscript{13} Whereas the past tense always takes the short form -t, the past participle may take the long form o/e/ő + tt:

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{áll} & \text{stand} \quad \text{állt} \sim \text{állott} \\
\text{hal} & \text{die} \quad \text{halt} \sim \text{halott} \\
\text{ír} & \text{write} \quad \text{írt} \sim \text{írott} \\
\text{tör} & \text{break} \quad \text{tört} \sim \text{törött}
\end{array}
\]

4.4.1.3

The future participle is -andó/-endő. It is attached directly to the verb stem in regular verbs.

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{kel} & \text{sell well} + \quad \text{endő} \rightarrow \text{kelendő} \quad \text{(easily) marketable} \\
\text{marad} & \text{remain} + \quad \text{andó} \rightarrow \text{marandó} \quad \text{enduring}
\end{array}
\]

4.4.2  \textbf{Present, past, future participles: usage}

The present, past, and future participles are similar in usage, though the future participle is by far a rarer form in Hungarian.

4.4.2.1

These participles may always be used as adjectives:

\textsuperscript{13} For description of Class B see 4.3.3. Past tense.
### Present Participles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hungarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>alszik</td>
<td>sleep</td>
<td>alvó kutyája</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dolgozik</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>dolgozó emberek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emelkedik</td>
<td>rise</td>
<td>emelkedő árak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mosolyog</td>
<td>smile</td>
<td>mosolygó gyerek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tanul</td>
<td>study</td>
<td>tanuló fiú</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Past Participles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hungarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ismer</td>
<td>know</td>
<td>jól ismert író</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kifest</td>
<td>paint</td>
<td>kifestett szoba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>öltözik</td>
<td>dress</td>
<td>selyembe öltözött nő</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Future Participles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hungarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>leendő anya</td>
<td>will be</td>
<td>mother-to-be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teendő munka</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>work to do</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Non-finite Forms

Many present and some past and future participles function as nouns:

### Present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hungarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fest</td>
<td>paint</td>
<td>festő</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ír</td>
<td>write</td>
<td>író</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>szerkeszt</td>
<td>edit</td>
<td>szerkesztő</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tanul</td>
<td>study</td>
<td>tanuló</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Past

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hungarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>befő</td>
<td>become thick</td>
<td>befőtt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>felnő</td>
<td>grow up</td>
<td>felnőtt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vádol</td>
<td>accuse</td>
<td>vádlott</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hungarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jön</td>
<td>come</td>
<td>jövendő</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tesz</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>teendő</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In prose the participles are found in adjectival constructions and compare (semantically – not stylistically) with relative clauses in colloquial speech. It may help to think of them as relative clauses (modifying a previously mentioned noun) which have been condensed into adjectival constructions. Often the participial–adjectival constructions translate best into English as relative clauses, though English may also use a similar participial construction.

Az a fiú, aki integet, az öcsém. (relative clause)
That boy who is waving is my little brother.

Az az integető fiú az öcsém. (participle as adjective)
(lit.) That waving boy is my little brother.

Zsuzsa egy olyan házba akar beköltözni, ami a múlt században épült. (relat. clause)
Zsuzsa wants to move into a house which was built in the last century.

Zsuzsa egy múlt században épült házba akar beköltözni. (participle as adjective)
Zsuzsa wants to move into a house built in the last century.

 Participial-adjectival constructions can be rather lengthy in prose. When translating from Hungarian, it is best to identify the noun being modified and continue to translate from right to left.

4.4.3 Adverbial participle

The adverbial participle is -va/-ve. It is attached directly to the stem.

mosolyog smile + va → mosolyogva (while) smiling
énekel sing + ve → énekelve (while) singing

The adverbial participle modifies a conjugated verb; it expresses a continuing action occurring at the time of another action.

Mosolyogva lépett be a szobába.
She entered the room smiling.

Tegyél le! – mondta nevetve a kisfiú.
‘Put me down!’ said the boy laughing.
See section 17.9 for colloquial usage of the adverbial participle with van ‘be’.

### 4.4.4 Infinitive

The infinitive ending is -ni and it is attached directly to verb stems. In verb stems ending in two consonants\(^\text{14}\) or long vowel + t, the linking vowel a/e is required before suffixing.\(^\text{15}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ért} + \text{eni} & \rightarrow \text{ért} \text{en}i & \text{to understand} \\
\text{főz} + \text{ni} & \rightarrow \text{főz} \text{ni} & \text{to cook} \\
\text{hall} + \text{ani} & \rightarrow \text{hall} \text{ani} & \text{to hear} \\
\text{olvas} + \text{ni} & \rightarrow \text{olvas} \text{ni} & \text{to read} \\
\text{tanít} + \text{ani} & \rightarrow \text{tanít} \text{ani} & \text{to teach}
\end{align*}
\]

Undeclined infinitives are found as the complement of other verbs:

- **Szeretek olvasni.** I like to read.
- **Aludni akarok.** I want to sleep.

If the direct object of the infinitive is definite, the definite conjugation is used on the conjugated verb unless the verb is impersonal (e.g., *kell* ‘is necessary’, *lehet* ‘is possible’) or inherently intransitive (e.g., *megy* ‘go’, *igyekszik* ‘strive’).

- **Szeretném befejezni ezt a dolgozatot.** I would like to finish this paper.
- **Nem tudom kinyitni az üveget.** I can’t open the bottle.
- **Ki akarja elkészíteni a vacsorát ma este?** Who wants to make dinner tonight?

Note the following emphatic, topical use of the infinitive; it implies, and is usually followed by, a de ‘but’ clause.

- **Olvasni olvastam a könyvet, de nem volt jó.** (Well,) I *read* the book, but it wasn’t good.

---

\(^{14}\) Exceptions include *áll* ‘stand’, *száll* ‘fly’, *varr* ‘sew’, and *forr* ‘boil’.

\(^{15}\) Compare with the conditional where the linking vowel is required under identical conditions.
4.4.5 Declined infinitives

Declined infinitives are used in impersonal constructions. They are formed by attaching personal (possessive) endings to infinitives. The infinitive is first reduced to (a/e)n, i.e., without the final i. The following personal endings are then attached. (See section 17.7 on the use of impersonal constructions.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declined infinitives – Personal endings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plural</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

tanít teach  ad give  kezd begin  megy go  ül sit
tanítani adni kezdeni menni ülni
tanítanom adnom kezdenem mennem ülnöm
tanítanod adnod kezdened menned ülnöd
tanítania adnia kezdenie mennie ülnie
tanítanunk adnunk kezdenünk mennünk ülnünk
tanítanotok adnotok kezdenetek mennetek ülnötök
tanítaniuk adniuk kezdeniük menniük ülniük
4.5 Productive derivational endings

Hungarian has three derivational endings which can be attached to most verbs before the tense and mood endings: the potential, causative, and frequentative. For more derivational endings occurring less productively, see chapter 12 on word formation.

4.5.1 The potential: formation

The potential is added to verb stems to add the meaning ‘may’, ‘can’, or ‘is possible’ to the verb. The potential ending is -hat/-het and may be added to all verbs. In regular verbs it attaches directly to the verb stem, thereby creating a new verb stem subject to all tenses, moods and conjugations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Verb Stem</th>
<th>Potential Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ad</td>
<td>adhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>játszik</td>
<td>játszhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kér</td>
<td>kérhet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kezd</td>
<td>kezdet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>főz</td>
<td>főzhet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the potential is attached it redefines the verb type: once in place, the verbs then conjugate as any other verb type ending in a short vowel + t. So, for example, though játszik ‘play’ is considered Class A in the past tense because its stem ends in two consonants, játszhat ‘may play’ is Class C. The change in stem has repercussions throughout the verbal paradigm; all conjugational patterns apply to the new stem.

Sample verb conjugations with the potential -hat/-het:

---

16 The potential form of van ‘be’ is formed from the lesz ‘will be’ root. See appendix 1 for the formation of the potential with irregular verbs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>Definite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>játszhat,</td>
<td>adhat,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may play</td>
<td>may give</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>én</td>
<td>játszhatok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te</td>
<td>játszhatasz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ő</td>
<td>játszhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi</td>
<td>játszhatunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti</td>
<td>játszhattak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ők</td>
<td>játszhatnak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>én—téged/ benneteket</td>
<td>adhatlak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjunctive</th>
<th>Conditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>Definite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>főzhet,</td>
<td>kereshet,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may cook</td>
<td>may look for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>én</td>
<td>főzhessek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te</td>
<td>főzhess(él)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ő</td>
<td>főzhessen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi</td>
<td>főzhessünk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti</td>
<td>főzhessetek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ők</td>
<td>főzhessenek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>én—téged/ benneteket</td>
<td>kereshesselek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5.2 Use of the potential

The most common use of the potential is to denote ‘may’, ‘is allowed’.

**Bejöhetsz.** You may come in.

**Mehetünk?** May we go?

**Jani itt maradhat, ameddig csak akar.** Jani can stay here as long as he wants.

It can also have the meaning ‘might, could’ in expressions of doubt or uncertainty.

**Jó film lehet.**
It might be a good movie.

**Mennyibe kerülhet egy belvárosi lakás?**
How much might a downtown apartment cost?

**Hol szerezhettem ezt a tollat?**
Where could I have gotten this pen?

It is often combined with the conditional to make a request very polite.

**Megnézhethetném azt a könyvet?**
Could I have a look at that book?

**Mondhatnék valamit?**
Might I say something?

Combined with the past conditional, the potential has the meaning ‘could have + past participle’

**Megvehetted volna azt az inget.**
You could have bought that shirt.

**Szorgalmasabban dolgozhattál volna a tervezeten.**
You could have worked harder on the draft.

**Meghívhattam volna, csak nem akartam.**
I could have invited him, I just didn’t want to.

The potential combines with the present participle -ó/-ő and the suffix -atlan/-etlen ‘without’ to form adjectives:
4.5.3 The causative: formation

The causative is added to verb stems to denote the subject has something done, i.e., the action is not done by the subject directly.

The causative is -at/-et or -tat/-tet and is highly productive, though (for semantic reasons) it cannot be used on all verbs.

The -tat/-tet ending is added to verbs ending in a vowel + t and most polysyllabic verbs:

- keres look for
- olvas read
- rendel order
- tisztít clean

The -at/-et ending is added to verbs ending in a consonant + t and most monosyllabic verbs:

- ért understand
- kér ask for
- mos wash
- vár wait

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Causative</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>keres</td>
<td>kerestet</td>
<td>have someone look for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>olvas</td>
<td>olvastat</td>
<td>have someone read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rendel</td>
<td>rendeltet</td>
<td>have someone order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tisztít</td>
<td>tisztíttat</td>
<td>have someone clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ért</td>
<td>értet</td>
<td>have someone understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kér</td>
<td>kéret</td>
<td>have someone ask for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mos</td>
<td>mosat</td>
<td>have someone wash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vár</td>
<td>várat</td>
<td>have someone wait</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following monosyllabic verb stems take the -tat/-tet ending.

```
ázik  become soaked  áztat  soak something
bukik  fail  buktat  fail someone
él  live  éltet  keep someone alive
jár  go  jártat  to have someone/something walk or go
kel  rise  keltet  hatch
kopik  wear away  koptat  wear something down
lép  step  léptet  keep (a horse) at a slow pace
szokik  get used to  szoktat  accustom someone to
szopik  suck  szoptat  breastfeed
szűnik  cease, stop  szűntet  stop, interrupt
üll  sit  ültet  plant, have someone sit
```

As with the potential ending, verbs re-formed in the causative form new stem types. Once attached, the verbs conjugate as any regular verb ending in a short vowel + t.

Sample verb conjugations with the causative -at/-et, -tat/-tet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>Definite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rendeltet, have sy order</td>
<td>tisztíttat, have sy clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>én  rendeltetek tisztíttatatom</td>
<td>mosattam kerestettem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te  rendeltetsz tisztíttatatod</td>
<td>mosattál kerestetted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ő  rendeltet tisztíttatatja</td>
<td>mosatott kerestette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi  rendeltetünk tisztíttatjuk</td>
<td>mosattunk kerestettük</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti  rendeltettek tisztíttatjátok</td>
<td>mosattatok kerestettétek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ök  rendeltetnek tisztíttatják</td>
<td>mosattak kerestették</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A verb formed with the causative may add the potential to its stem.

\[
\text{olvas} + \text{ tat} + \text{ hat} \rightarrow \text{olvastathat} \quad \text{may have someone read}
\]

\[
\text{rendel} + \text{ tet} + \text{ het} \rightarrow \text{rendeltethet} \quad \text{may have someone order}
\]

**4.5.4 Use of the causative**

The causative is used to denote that it is not the subject, rather someone else who performs the action of the verb. The one who performs the action may or may not be included in the sentence; when the performer is included, it is usually marked with the instrumental case -val/-vel.

**Kivasaltattam az ingemet a férfjámmel.**
I had my husband iron my shirt.

**A növém elszívatta velem az első cigarettát.**
My older sister got me to smoke my first cigarette.

**Mátyással hívatott egy taxi.**
She had Mátyas call a taxi.

**Egy új kabátot varratott az anyjával.**
She had her mother sew her a new coat.

If there is no other direct object in the sentence, the performer of the activity is in the accusative case.
The teacher had the students take an exam.

My neighbor walks her dog every night.

I had the children sit down.

The causative ending is sometimes used to make an intransitive verb transitive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intransitive</th>
<th>Transitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bukik fail</td>
<td>buktat fail someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fürdik take a bath</td>
<td>fürdet give someone a bath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>szűnik cease, stop</td>
<td>szüntet stop, interrupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>változik change</td>
<td>változtat change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Her husband has really changed.

It is not allowed to change the results.

Poverty has ended.

They abolished the decree.

**The frequentative: formation**

Frequentatives are added to verb stems to denote that the action is done repetitively, for a lengthy period of time, or without specific aim or purpose.

The most common frequentative ending is -gat/-get (for other, less productive frequentative suffixes, see chapter 12 on word formation). It is attached directly to the verb stem; most monosyllabic stems, however, require a linking vowel (o/e/ö) before the frequentative.
néz  watch  nézeget  look about
olvas  read  olvasgat  read a bit
rendez  organize  rendezget  tidy up a bit
üt  strike  ütöget  keep on striking

Verbs re-formed in the frequentative form new stem types. Once attached, the verbs conjugate as any verb ending in a short vowel + t.

Sample verb conjugations with the frequentative -gat/-get.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Indefinite</th>
<th>Present Definite</th>
<th>Past Indefinite</th>
<th>Past Definite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nézeget, look about</td>
<td>ütöget, keep striking</td>
<td>mosogat, wash dishes</td>
<td>keverget, keep stirring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjunctive Indefinite</th>
<th>Subjunctive Definite</th>
<th>Conditional Indefinite</th>
<th>Conditional Definite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sétálgot, stroll about</td>
<td>hívogat, call repeatedly</td>
<td>rendezget, tidy up</td>
<td>olvasgat, read a bit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjunctive</th>
<th>Conditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>én sétálgassak hívogassam rendezgetnék olvasgatnám</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te sétálgass(ál) hívogas(sa)d rendezgetnél olvasgatnád</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ő sétálgasson hívogassa rendezgetne olvasgatná</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi sétálgassunk hívogassuk rendezgetnénk olvasgatnánk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti sétálgassatok hívogassátok rendezgetnétek olvasgatnátok</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ők sétálgassanak hívogassák rendezgetnének olvasgatnák</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The frequentative may change the meaning of the verb more radically:

- beszél speak, beszélget chat
- hall hear, hallgat listen, be quiet
- kér ask for, kéréget beg
- lát see, látogat visit
- mos wash, mosogat do the dishes

The frequentative may add the potential to its stem.

- olvas read, olvasgathat may read a bit
- néz look at, nézegethet may look about

4.6 Coverbs

Coverbs are prefixes that can be attached to (and subsequently separated from) verbs. Coverbs modify verbs in a variety of ways, including indicating the direction of motion, the manner of an action, and the beginning or completion of an action (aspect). By no means is this the extent of their semantic reach; sometimes coverbs change the meaning of the verb entirely.

Verbs attach only one coverb at a time. The position of coverbs in sentence word order is often affected when introducing focus, quasi-auxiliary verbs and imperatives. See chapter 16 for a complete discussion of word order and coverbs.

In this section we will first examine the general (directional, manner, and aspectual) uses of coverbs and then focus on their more individual uses.

4.6.1 Direction

The most common directional coverbs include be ‘in’, ki ‘out’, fel ‘up’, le ‘down’, el ‘away’, oda ‘toward there’, ide ‘toward here’, vissza ‘back’. Not surprisingly, verbs of motion are particularly inclined to take coverbs of direction, e.g., megy ‘go’ and jön ‘come’:

- bemegy go in
- bejön come in
- kimegy go out
- kijön come out
felmegy go up feljön come up
lemegy go down lejön come down
elmegy go away, leave eljön come away
odamegy go there idejön come here
visszamegy go back visszajön come back

Beteszi a tollat a táskába.
He puts the pen into the bag.

Visszajöttünk a szabadságról.
We have returned from vacation.

Kiszedtem a pénzt a tárcából.
I took the money out of the wallet.

A pincér elviszi a tányérokat.
The waiter takes away the plates.

Felmennek a hegyre.
They are going up the mountain.

Laci lement a boltba kenyérért.
Laci went (down) to the store for bread.

Odament a kerítéshez.
He went over toward the fence.

Kitette a széket a kertbe.
She put the chair out into the garden.

Felszállt a villamosra.
She got on the tram.

Elvették az útlevelemet tőlem.
They took my passport away from me.

Directional coverbs may also be used with verbs with no motion, thereby adding motion to them:

áll stand feláll stand up odaáll stand over there
ül sit leül sit down odaül sit over there
ad give visszaad give back bead turn in, deliver
Manner

Coverbs such as végig ‘all the way’, agyon ‘all the way’, ‘to death’, túl ‘beyond’, ‘too (excessive)’, újra ‘anew’ modify the verb with respect to how, or to what extent the action is executed.

\[
\begin{array}{lll}
\text{ver} & \text{beat} & \text{agyonver} \quad \text{beat to death} \\
\text{él} & \text{live} & \text{túlél} \quad \text{survive} \\
\text{megy} & \text{go} & \text{végigmegy} \quad \text{go all the way} \\
választ & \text{elect} & \text{újraválaszt} \quad \text{re-elect}
\end{array}
\]

Végigmentek a piacon.
They walked all the way through the market.

A szülei túlélték a háborút.
Her parents survived the war.

Újraválasztották a népszerű elnököt.
The popular president was re-elected.

Aspect

In English the past, present and future tenses have several forms, e.g., *I was going, I went, I have gone* are all past tense forms of the verb ‘to go’. Because Hungarian has only one form for each tense, it relies on the use of coverbs and word order to indicate progressive or completed actions. The aspect of the verb is termed *imperfective* when the action is progressive or ongoing; the *perfective* aspect refers to actions that were or will be completed.

Although all coverbs can have a perfectivizing function, the two most common perfectivizing coverbs are *meg* and *el*.

In the past tense, the use of a coverb (perfective aspect) indicates that the action is complete; verbs without coverbs indicate that an action was
in progress. In the present tense, the verbs with no coverbs indicate actions in progress with no comment as to completion. Present tense verbs with coverbs, however, tend to be translated into the future tense in English\textsuperscript{17} (because for most verbs the completion of the action, in fact, comes at a time after the statement is made).

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Írtam egy levelet. & I was writing a letter. \quad (imperfective) \\
Megírtam a levelet. & I wrote the letter. \quad (perfective) \\
Olvassa a könyvet. & She is reading the book. \quad (imperfective) \\
Elolvassa a könyvet. & She will read the book. \quad (perfective) \\
\end{tabular}

In the subjunctive/imperative, there is no tense; the use of coverbs still indicates perfective aspect.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Egyél valamit! & Eat something! \\
Edd meg a szendvicset! & Eat (up) the sandwich! \\
\end{tabular}

Although present tense verbs prefixed with coverbs often indicate future tense, verbs and coverbs may also combine with the future auxiliary fog; the aspect is perfective and the meaning is often simply one of emphasis, though it is not necessarily so.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Megtanulja a verset. & She will learn the poem. \\
Meg fogja tanulni a verset. & She \textit{will} learn the poem. \\
\end{tabular}

Conversely, present tense verbs without coverbs combine with the future auxiliary fog to indicate imperfective future.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Sírok. & I am crying. \\
Sírni fogok. & I am going to cry. \\
Pihen. & She is resting. \\
Pihenni fog, mikor lesz ideje. & She will rest when she has time. \\
\end{tabular}

Imperfective aspect may co-occur with coverbs. Here word order is crucial: the coverb must be removed to a post-verb position.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Átmentem az utcán. & I walked across the street. \quad (perfective) \\
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{17} This does not mean, however, that the converse is true, i.e., you may not simply add a coverb to a verb to indicate future tense.
Mentem át az utcán, mikor eszembe jutott, hogy otthon várnak. (imperfective)
I was walking across the street when I remembered that I was expected at home.

Coverbs may also indicate the beginning of an action:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coverb</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>alszik</td>
<td>sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elalszik</td>
<td>fall asleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haragszik</td>
<td>be angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>megharagszik</td>
<td>get angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lát</td>
<td>see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meglát</td>
<td>espy, catch sight of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sír</td>
<td>cry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elsírja magát</td>
<td>burst into tears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>szeret</td>
<td>like, love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>megszeret</td>
<td>take a fondness or liking to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amióta itt élek, megszerettem ezt a várost.
I have come to love this city since I've been living here.

Nagyon nehéz neki elaludni.
It is very hard for him to fall asleep.

Nagyon haragszik rám. Megharagudott, mikor későn jöttem haza.
She is very angry with me. She got angry when I came home late.

Some verbs occur only with coverbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coverb</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>megbetegszik</td>
<td>fall ill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>megbénul</td>
<td>become paralyzed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>megrészegszik</td>
<td>become drunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>megsüketül</td>
<td>go deaf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.4 Common uses of some common coverbs

Coverbs have an infinite number of uses – only the most common are listed here. Simply because a coverb has one meaning with one verb does not mean that any verb can attach to the same coverb and result in the same meaning. Each verb has its own inventory of possible coverbs, and it is sometimes surprising to find what coverbs may occur with certain verbs.18

---

18 One example: akaszt ‘hang (transitive)’:
Use meg to indicate the completion of an action in the past, present or future.

Megírta a könyvet. She wrote the book.

Megmosom a kezemet. I (will) wash my hands.

Megvárlak. I (will) wait for you (until you come).

Az orvos megvizsgálja a betegeket. The doctor examines/will examine the patients.

Meg may indicate the beginning of an action:

Úgy megörültem neked, amikor megláttalak! I was so delighted when I caught sight of you!

Apám két évvel ezelőtt megbetegedett. My father fell ill two years ago.

Megfázol, ha nem vigyázol jobban magadra. You will catch cold if you don’t take better care of yourself.

Use meg to indicate the single instance of an action.

Megcsillant a gyémánt a napfényben. The diamond flashed in the sunlight.

Megzörrentek a levelek. The leaves rustled.

Húzd meg azt a kart! Give that lever a pull!

Meg will often indicate the expected or successful occurrence of an action.

Minden nap megjön a kenyér a sarki boltba. Every day the bread comes to the corner store. (It is expected to come.)

Megtalálta a pénztárcáját. He found his wallet. (The use of meg presumes he had been looking for it.)

felakaszt ‘hang up’ Felakasztja a kabátját a fogasra. He hangs his coat on the rack.

leakaszt ‘unhang’ Leakasztja a kabátját a fogasról. He takes his coat off the rack. (lit., he hangs it down.)
Meg kell keresnem a szemüvegemet.
I have to look for (and find) my glasses. (The use of meg
presumes finding the glasses.)

Végre megjött a tavasz!
Spring has finally arrived!

Use meg with verbs of communication, to (briefly) utter a statement:

Megmondtam neki a véleményemet.
I gave him my opinion.

Megüzente, hogy jöjjek haza.
She sent word for me to come home.

Megkérdeztem tőle, hogy mikor kell a pénz.
I asked her when she needed the money.

The coverb el has the directional meaning away.

Eltette a meleg ruhát jövő télig.
He put the warm clothes away until next winter.

Elvették a jegyeket tőlünk.
They took (away) our tickets.

Elrúgta a labdát.
He kicked the ball away.

Elkérte tőlem a tollamat.
He asked me for my pen

Use el as a perfectivizing coverb to indicate the completion of an action.

Elolvasta a kötelező könyveket.
He read the required books.

Elvégezte a munkát.
He finished the work.

El may indicate the beginning of an action.

Elindult a vonat. The train departed.

Elaludt a fiam a vonaton. My son fell asleep on the train.
Elgondolkozott azon, amit mondtam.
He began to think over what I said.

Elhallgattak a madarak.
The birds fell silent.

El may combine with a verb to indicate the action occurs all the way to a place.

Ugye eljössz a buliba?
You are coming to the party, right?

A fiúk elkísértek bennünket a buszmegállóig.
The boys escorted us to the bus stop.

Use el with verbs to indicate covering over a (wide) area.

A gaz elborította a mezőt.
The field was covered with weeds.

Régen eltakarták az arcukat egy fátyollal.
In the old days they covered their faces with a veil.

El can change the meaning of the verb by indicating the action is done incorrectly.

Elírtam a címét, és most nem találom a házszámát.
I wrote down the wrong address and now I can’t find her building number.

Elnéztem a menetrendet, és lekéstem a vonatot.
I misread the schedule and missed the train.

Use el to mean apart.

A szüleim 1990-ben váltak el.
My parents divorced in 1990.

Elszakadt a szoknyám a villamoson.
My skirt tore on the tram.

El is found in construction with the postpositions előtt, mellett: the combination results in the meaning ‘along’.

Az a kocsi mindig elmegy a házunk előtt.
That car is always going by our house.

Az egész város mellett folyik el a Tisza.
The Tisza flows along the side of the whole city.
Use el to indicate using something up.

**Elkártyázta az összes pénzét.**  
He spent all of his money on cards. (lit., He carded away all his money.)

**Elittuk az egész havi fizetését.**  
We drank his whole month's salary.

**Elhasználták a cukrot.**  
They used up the sugar.

El may indicate the lengthy duration of an action.

**Jól elbeszélgették a napot.**  
They talked the whole day through.

**Jó sokáig elüldögéltek a kávéházban.**  
They lounged around a good long time in the coffee shop.

*Used with verbs of communication, el indicates that something is said or otherwise communicated (all the way) to the end.*

**Elmesélte az egész történetet.**  
He told the whole story.

**Elmagyarázta, hogy kellett betörni a házba.**  
He explained at length how he had to break into the house.

**Elénekelt nekem egy gyönyörű népdalt.**  
He sang me a beautiful folksong.

It is useful to compare the uses of el and meg when combined with the same verbs. When combined with verbs describing a change in physical or mental condition, the coverb el indicates an unfortunate turn of events and meg indicates an expected or usual change.

**Jól meghízott a disznó.**  
The pig got nice and fat.

**Teljesen elhízott, és már alig tud menni.**  
He got really fat and now can hardly walk.

**Megfagyott a víz a mélyhűtőben.**  
The water froze in the freezer.

**Elfagyott a keze.**  
His hand got frostbite.
The coverb *be* has the directional meaning *in, into*.

- Benézett a szobába. He looked into the room.
- Beszálltam a kocsiba. I got into the car.
- Betette a ruhát a szekrénybe. She put the dress in the closet.
- Beszippantotta a friss levegőt. He breathed in the fresh air.

*Be* combines with verbs to mean ‘cover entirely’, ‘envelop’ by some means or action.

- Betakarta a gyereket, hogy ne fázzon az éjjel. She covered up the child, so he wouldn’t get cold in the night.
- Befestettem feketére a székeket. I painted the chairs black.
- Teljesen befedte a házat a hó. The house was completely covered with snow.
- Kend be az orrodat, hogy ne égjen le! Put some cream on your nose so it doesn’t burn!

Use the coverb *be* with verbs meaning ‘close’, ‘fasten’.

- Becsukta az ablakot. He closed the window.
- Begomboltam a kabátomat. I buttoned up my coat.
- Becsomagoltam az ajándékot. I wrapped up the present.
- Be kell varrni a szakadást a nadráján. He has to sew up the tear on his pants.
- Befűztem a cipőmet. I tied my shoes.
The coverb ki has the directional meaning ‘out’.

- **Kimentek a kertbe.** They went out to the garden.
- **Kiveszik az almát a kosárból.** They will take the apples out of the basket.
- **Kivitte a szemetet.** He took out the garbage.
- **Kinéztek az ablakon.** They looked out the window.

The coverb ki often combines with verbs to mean ‘undo’.

- **Kifűztem a cipőmet.** I untied my shoes.
- **Kibontották az összes csomagot.** They opened up all of the packages.
- **Ki kell csomagolni a bőröndöket, mielőtt elmegyünk várost nézni.** We have to unpack before we go out to see the town.

Ki combines with verbs to indicate selection.

- **Kinéztem magamnak egy szép új autót.** I've picked out a nice new car for myself.
- **Kikeresték és kiírták az ismeretlen szavakat a szótárból.** They looked up and wrote out the unknown words in the dictionary.
- **Kiválasztotta a legszebb rózsát.** She chose the most beautiful rose.

The coverb fel has the directional meaning ‘up’.

- **Felmászott a hegyre.** She climbed up the mountain.
- **Felnéztünk a csillagokra.** We looked up at the stars.
- **Feltette a vázát a polcra.** She put the vase up on the shelf.
- **Felszaladt a lépcsőn.** He ran up the stairs.
Fel combines with verbs to mean ‘on’.

**Felvette a legszebb öltönyét.**
He put on his best suit.

**Felpróbált egy új kabátot, de nem tetszett neki.**
She tried on a new coat, but she didn’t like it.

**Te soha nem írod fel, amit mondok neked.**
You never write down (lit., write on) what I tell you.

Use *fel* with verbs to mean ‘furnish or supply with something’.

**Felfegyverezték a hadsereget.**
They armed the troops.

**Ebből a pénzből nem tudok felruházkodni.**
I can’t provide myself with clothes with this money.

**Felhatalmazta az ügyvédet, hogy eladja a házát.**
She gave the lawyer the authority to sell her house.

The coverb *fel* is used with verbs of motion to indicate ‘turning over’ or ‘upside down’.

**Felfordították a hajót.**
They capsized the boat.

**Az utóbbi hír felkavarta a gyomrát.**
The recent news turned his stomach.

**Felborította a széket.**
She knocked the chair over.

**Teljesen fel van fordítva a ház.**
The house is a mess (lit., turned upside down).

Fel combines with verbs to mean ‘appear from somewhere’.

**A kislány hirtelen felbukkant a bokor mögül.**
The little girl suddenly appeared from behind the bush.

**Ki fedezte fel a rádiomot?**
Who discovered radium?

**Hirtelen felkerültek a feketelistára.**
They suddenly turned up on the blacklist.
Fel is used with verbs describing the change of a mental state denoting the onset of the change.

**Korán ébredtem fel.**
I woke up early.

**Mire feleszmélt, a rablók már eltűntek.**
By the time he came to, the burglars had disappeared.

**Feldühödtem, mikor hallottam, mi történt.**
I became enraged when I heard what had happened.

Fel may indicate the (sudden) beginning of an action.

**Felsírt, mikor az orvos beleszúrta a tünt.**
He cried out when the doctor stuck in the needle.

**Felragyogott az arca, mikor megpillantotta a régóta várt barátnőjét.**
His face shone when he caught sight of his long awaited girlfriend.

**Le**

The coverb *le* has the directional meaning ‘down’.

**Mikor fog leszállni a repülőgép?**
When will the plane land?

**Gyere le onnan!**
Come down from there!

**Lefeküdt az ágyra, és rögtön elaludt.**
She lay down on the bed and fell asleep immediately.

**Lenéztek az udvarra, hogy ott van-e a kutya.**
They looked down into the courtyard to see if the dog was there.

Le combines with verbs to mean ‘off’.

**Leszegíted a kabátomat?**
Will you help me off with my coat?

**Levette a cuccait az asztalról.**
She took her things off the table.

**Letört az odvas ág a fáról.**
The rotten branch broke off the tree.
Le akart szállni a villamosról.
He wanted to get off the tram.

Le combines with verbs meaning ‘to remove or take away’, ‘relinquish’, ‘give up’.

**Lefegyverezték a hadsereget.**
The troops were disarmed.

**Anne Boleynt 1536-ban fejezték le.**
Anne Boleyn was beheaded in 1536.

**Télre kellett leszerelni a hajót.**
The ship had to be dismantled for winter.

**Le kell szoknia a dohányzásról.**
He must give up smoking.

**Bármit mondasz, nem tudsz lebeszélni arról, hogy elmenjek!**
No matter what you say you can not talk me out of going.

Le is used with verbs meaning ‘to cover the surface of something’.

**Le kell takarni az ágyat valami szebb takaróval.**
We have to cover the bed with a prettier spread.

**Lehunytam a szememet, hogy pihenjek egy kicsit.**
I closed my eyes to rest a bit.

Use the coverb *le* to indicate ‘copying’, ‘reproducing’ by some means.

**Leírtam a címét a noteszembe.**
I wrote his address into my notebook.

**Le kell fényképezned azt a szobrot!**
You have to take a picture of that statue!

**Bár nem lett volna szabad, lemasolta a könyvet.**
She made a copy of the book though she wasn’t really allowed to.

Le combines with verbs to mean ‘to lessen or reduce in some way’.

**Egy idő után lecsillapodott a fájdalom.**
After a while the pain lessened.

**Lefogytál, amiőta utoljára láttalak.**
You have lost weight since I last saw you.
He slowed his walk when he saw the stranger.

Le may provide a negative connotation to verbs.

Even though I didn’t know the man, he used the familiar te form with me.

Unfortunately the director looks down on his colleagues.

He really put his brother-in-law down and since then they don’t speak.

### 4.6.5 More coverbs

Many more coverbs exist in addition to those outlined in the preceding section. Coverbs are derived from all parts of speech; sometimes it is only a writing convention that distinguishes coverbs from adverbs (i.e., they are written as one word with the verb, not two).

- **Jólesett a séta.** The walk felt good. *(jól* is a coverb)
- **Jól érzi magát.** He feels well. *(jól* is an adverb)
- **Egyetértek veled.** I agree with you. *(egyet* is a coverb)
- **Egyet sóhajtott.** She gave a sigh. *(egyet* is an adverbial)

Some pronominalized cases may serve as coverbs; these are often restricted to the third person singular form.

- **bele** **Beletette a cukrot a kávéba.** She put the sugar into the coffee.
- **rá** **Ránézett a fiúra.** He looked at the boy.
- **rajta** **Rajtakaptam a hazugságon** I caught him in a lie.
- **hozzá** **Hozzáfordultam jó tanácsért.** I turned to him for good advice.
- **neki** **Nekimentem a falnak.** I bumped into the wall.
Many postpositions may also serve as coverbs.

át            Kétszer kellett átírni a szöveget.
They had to rewrite the text twice.

alá           Aláírta az oklevelet.
She signed the document.

ellen         Makacsul ellenálltak nekem.
They stubbornly resisted me.

keresztül      Keresztülmentek a mezőn.
They passed through the field.

körül          Körülnéztünk az üzletben.
We looked around the shop.

mellé          Mellébeszéltek.
They didn’t speak to the issue. (lit., They spoke
beside it.)

túl            Túbcsüli a könyv értékét.
He overestimates the value of the book.

végig          Végigjártuk a környéket.
We walked through the whole area.

Additional important coverbs include the following.

elő            forth          Elővették a könyvüket.
They took out their books.

félfre         aside, mis-
Félfregett egy kis pénzt a jövőre.
They put some money aside for the future.

Félfreértettem a helyzetet.
I misunderstood the situation.

fenn           above, up      Fenntartotta magát a vízben.
He stayed afloat in the water. (lit, kept
himself up)

hátra          backward       Hátramaradtunk, mert fáradtak voltunk.
We fell behind because we were tired.

haza           homeward      Hazajött a hétvégére.
She came home for the weekend.
oda  toward there  Odamegyünk a kirakathoz.  We will walk over to the display window.

ott  there  Szó nélkül otthagyta az állását.  He left his job without a word.

össze  together  A pulóverem összemennent a forró vízben.  My sweater shrank in the hot water.  (lit., went together)

szét  apart  Szétesett a polc a nappaliban.  The shelf fell apart in the living room.

tovább  further  Továbbadta az üzenetet.  She passed the message on.

utána  after  Utána tudsz nézni az ügynek?  Can you look into the matter?

vissza  back  Hat órakor jön vissza a munkahelyről.  She comes back from work at six o’clock.
Chapter 5

Nouns

5.1 Articles

5.1.1 Definite article

The definite article is a or az ‘the’, the latter reserved for use before words beginning with a vowel. It does not agree in case or number with its noun.

- **a ház** the house  **a házban** in the house
- **az esemény** the event  **az események** the events

5.1.1.1

The definite article is used similarly as in English with the following additional uses:

- before possessed nominals: **a gyerekem** ‘my child’ (except in ‘have’ constructions)
- before possessive pronouns: **az enyém** ‘mine’
- before nominals with a demonstrative pronoun: **ez a gyerek** ‘this child’
- before many abstract nouns: **Ilyen az élet**. ‘Such is life.’
- before a noun in order to give it a generic connotation: **Szeretem a banánt**. ‘I like bananas.’
- in colloquial speech before a person’s name: **Kedves a Péter**. ‘Péter is nice.’
5.1.2 Indefinite article

The indefinite article is egy ‘a’, ‘an’.

Tegnap este elolvastam egy könyvet. I read a book last night.

5.1.3 Zero article

There are some cases where neither article is used:

5.1.3.1

Existential (there is/there are) and ‘have’ constructions:

Szép fa van a kertben. There is a beautiful tree in the garden.

Neki gyönyörű háza van. She has a beautiful house.

5.1.3.2

Before predicate nouns:

Csilla énekesnő, Tamás rendőr. Csilla is a singer, Tamás is a policeman.

5.1.3.3

Finally, articles need not be used before indefinite subjects, objects or adverbials occurring immediately before the verb. (When occurring after the verb, however, there is usually an article.)

Minden este János levest főz. János makes soup every night.

A Kovácsék (egy) szép lakásban laknak. The Kovácses live in a nice apartment.

Abban a lakásban (egy) kedves család lakik. A nice family lives in that apartment.
5.2 Nouns and suffixes

5.2.1 Suffixes

Hungarian is an agglutinative language, i.e., suffixes and prefixes can be attached to words to change their meaning and/or function in a sentence. Suffixes can be added to nouns to indicate plurality, possession, location, manner, etc. In fact, several suffixes can be added to the same word; for example we may attach two suffixes to the word zseb ‘pocket’: the plural -k, and a locative case -ben ‘in’ to yield zsebekben ‘in pockets’.

5.2.2 Vowel harmony

For the most part vowel harmony is maintained when adding suffixes; most suffixes come with two or more vowel choices either within the suffix itself or as a linking vowel between the stem and the suffix. Examples are abundant: the illative case has the variants -ban/ben; the allative case has the variants -hoz/-hez/-höz.

5.2.3 Gender

There is no gender in Hungarian in either nouns or pronouns.

5.2.4 Stem alternation

Suffixes, e.g., the plural, cases, and possessive suffixes, are attached directly to the end of a word, sometimes creating a change in the word stem, e.g., ló ‘horse’ has the stem lov- when forming the plural. It is helpful to recognize the different types of noun stems since each type attaches endings in its own way. Sometimes the difference in the way nouns decline is subtle, hence careful attention must be paid to the differences. The rest of this chapter classifies nouns according to their stem alternations.
Although not all suffixes cause a change in the noun stem, many do. For example, the delative case -ról ‘off’ attaches to the stem ló ‘horse’ with no change in the stem: lóról ‘off the horse’. When suffixing the plural -k, however, the noun reveals another stem, in this instance, a v-stem: lovák ‘horses’.

The singular nominative case is the dictionary entry form; however, almost all of the information about a noun stem is revealed when forming the nominative plural. Therefore noun stems and the nominative plural are presented simultaneously. Throughout this book reference will be made to noun stems and how the plural is formed. Any idiosyncrasies with respect to noun stems and other suffixes are found under the individual suffix entry. A list of highly irregular noun stems not presented here is found in appendix 3.

**Plural:** The plural marker is -k. It is not used after numbers or other expressions of quantity – these are always followed by the singular. There is a separate plural paradigm for the possessive declension – there the -k plural is not used. Cases may be added to words already formed in the plural.

Depending on the stem of the noun, the plural -k may or may not need a linking vowel preceding it; the plural -k is attached to nouns according to the following rules. (For discussion of vowel harmony rules, see chapter 3.)

### 5.3.1 Nouns ending in a vowel

If a noun ends in a vowel, no linking vowel is needed before the plural suffix; if the final vowel is a or e, it must be lengthened to á or é before the plural -k; otherwise, simply add -k.
### Word final vowel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun ends in <strong>a</strong> or <strong>e</strong></th>
<th>Noun ends in other vowels¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
<td><strong>Plural</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lamp</td>
<td>lámpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bag</td>
<td>táska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cup</td>
<td>csésze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lesson</td>
<td>lecke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.3.2 Nouns ending in a consonant

When nouns end in a consonant they require linking vowels before the plural (and other suffixes, too). Most nouns require the linking vowel choice **o/e/ő** before these suffixes, a smaller number require the vowel choice **a/e**.

Some noun types also exhibit a change in the stem when adding linking vowels. The following are the most important noun stems grouped according to linking vowel choice and stem changes:

#### 5.3.2.1 Nouns requiring the linking vowel **a/e**

##### 5.3.2.1.1 Low vowel nouns²

This is a finite group of just over 100 nouns. There is no way of identifying these words by simply looking at them, hence they must be memorized. (A list of these nouns is found in appendix 3.) This group of nouns has a further subdivision: those that don’t lose the length of the last vowel when suffixing and those that do. (Of course, if the word does not have a long vowel in the final syllable, loss of length is irrelevant.)

---

¹ Except **férfi** ‘man’ which has the plural **férfiak**.

² So called because the linking vowels these nouns require are the low vowel **a/e**. (Thus technically, v-stems and -alom/-elem vocabulary are low vowel nouns too.)
5.3.2.1.2 V-stems

These nouns have a stem quite different from the nominative. The nominative ends in a long vowel, but the stem to which the plural ending attaches ends in a v preceded by a short vowel; this vowel may change in quality as well as length. For example, ló ‘horse’ has the stem lov-, but tó ‘lake’ has the stem tav-. There is some variation in suffixing within this group that will be pointed out for each suffix. A complete list of these nouns is found in appendix 3.
5.3.2.1.3 -alom, -elem nouns

A large class of nouns ends in the derivation -alom or -elem. These decline as a combination of both fleeting vowel (see below) and low-vowel nouns,\(^4\) i.e., the last vowel is omitted and a/e is the linking vowel choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-alom/-elem nouns</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reign</td>
<td>uralom</td>
<td>uralmak</td>
<td>mystery</td>
<td>rejtelem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power</td>
<td>hatalom</td>
<td>hatalmak</td>
<td>feeling</td>
<td>érzelem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reward</td>
<td>jutalom</td>
<td>jutalmak</td>
<td>mercy</td>
<td>kegyelem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.2.2 Nouns requiring the linking vowel o/e/ö

5.3.2.2.1 Fleeting vowel nouns

The last vowel of the noun is omitted when suffixing the plural -k. This is a large group of nouns that, like the low vowel nouns, must simply be memorized, although a pattern emerges with familiarity: fleeting vowel nouns have o, e, or ö in the last syllable and a final consonant of l, m, n, ny, r, sz, s, k, g and, less commonly, cs or ly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fleeting vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Back vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tower</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Front vowel, last vowel unrounded |
| Singular | Plural |
| twin     | iker    | ikrek   |
| strawberry | eper   | eprek   |

| Front vowel, last vowel rounded |
| Singular | Plural |
| nail     | köröm   | körmök |
| mirror   | tükör   | tükrök |

\(^4\) Except cimbalom ‘Hungarian cymbalo’ which is a fleeting vowel word.
Regular nouns

Most nouns are of this type – negatively defined as not belonging to any of the previous types. The linking vowel o/e/ö is supplied before the plural suffix -k.

Regular nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Back vowel</th>
<th>Back vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hat</td>
<td>kalap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paper</td>
<td>papír</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plate</td>
<td>tányér</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drawer</td>
<td>fiók</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Front vowel, last vowel</th>
<th>Front vowel, last vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vowel unrounded</td>
<td>Vowel rounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chair</td>
<td>szék</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>law</td>
<td>törvény</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>notebook</td>
<td>füzet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of plural formation

Nouns: plural

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<th>Ends in a consonant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>final vowel</td>
<td>other final vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is a or e</td>
<td>low vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lengthen vowel</td>
<td>-alom/-elem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fleeting vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>final vowel</td>
<td>final vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is a or e</td>
<td>low vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v-stems listed</td>
<td>-elem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>separately)</td>
<td>fleeting vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>regular</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stem loses length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no change in stem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>last vowel elides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no change in stem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>add -k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>add a/e + -k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>add o/e/ö + -k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4 Number and usage

5.4.1 Singular

The singular is unmarked. In addition to the standard use of the singular to mark non-plural items, the singular is used in some constructions differently than in English.

5.4.1.1

The singular is used after numbers and other expressions of quantity.

Hat ló van az istállóban. There are six horses in the stable.

Hány diák van a teremben? How many students are in the classroom?

5.4.1.2

The singular is used with paired body parts and the clothing or accessories that accompany them.

kéz hands láb legs; feet szem eyes
kesztyű gloves cipő shoes szemüveg glasses
nadrág pants

Koszos a cipő. The shoes are dirty.

Drága volt a szemüveg. The glasses were expensive.

If specific reference to only one of the pair is required, use fél ‘half’.

fél szem one eye fél kéz one hand fél láb one leg

Csak fél szemmel követte az eseményeket. He followed the events only half-heartedly. (lit., 'with half an eye')

---

5 This does not work with cipő, however; félcipő denotes a kind of shoe, not a single shoe.
The singular may be used when referring to a general category (the definite article is usually used in these constructions).

*Az alma a sarokban, a körte a polcon van.*
The apples are in the corner, the pears are on the shelf.

*A bálna a legnagyobb emlősállat.*
Whales are the largest mammals.

### 5.4.2 Plural

In Hungarian the plural is used as in English except for those areas described previously in the usage of the singular. The plural -k is not used in the possessive paradigm where another plural (-i-) is used (see section 8.2).

The plural declension of nouns is formed by simply adding the cases to the plural form of the noun. The temporal, distributive and sociative cases are not used in the plural.

- **a diákok** the students  
- **a diákokról** about the students

- **a gépek** the machines  
- **a gépekben** in the machines

When forming the plural accusative, the linking vowel a/e is always required after the plural -k.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nominative</th>
<th>accusative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kutyák</td>
<td>kutyákát</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>levelek</td>
<td>leveleket</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hungarian has an extensive case system. Cases are used to mark the grammatical function of words in a sentence: the nominative case marks the subject; the accusative case marks the direct object. They are also used adverbially: they may indicate place, time, manner. Most often case-marked words correspond to prepositional phrases in English (Hungarian has no prepositions): for example könyv ‘book’ marked with the inessive case -ben ‘in’ becomes könyvben ‘in (a) book’.

Cases attach to the ends of words; they may follow the plural suffix -k or possessive suffixes. Although one or more suffixes may precede them, cases are always the final suffix of a word: könyv + ek + ben ‘book + plural suffix + inessive case’ → könyvekben ‘in books’. Cases may also be attached to nouns already marked for possession: a könyvem ‘my book’ plus the inessive case yields a könyvemben ‘in my book’. Although most commonly used with nouns, cases may also attach to adjectives, numerals, and demonstrative and interrogative pronouns. Cases do not attach to most personal pronouns – there is a separate paradigm for these (see section 7.1.2). The complete paradigm of cases is called a declension.

Cases attach directly to the end of a word; the following stem alternations occur regularly:

(a) word-final a or e lengthens to á, é, respectively\(^1\)
(b) the accusative -t, superessive -n, distributive -nként, sociative -stul/-stül, and distributive-temporal -nta/-nte all require linking vowels when suffixing to consonant-final stems. This may trigger other changes in the word stem.

---

\(^1\) The two exceptions are the temporal (-kor) and the essive-formal (-ként); here there is no lengthening of the final vowel.
The Hungarian case system

**Grammatical cases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>ending</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nominative</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>no ending; marks the subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accusative</td>
<td>-t</td>
<td>marks the direct object</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Locative cases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>ending</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>illative</td>
<td>-ba/-be</td>
<td>into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inessive</td>
<td>-ban/-ben</td>
<td>in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elative</td>
<td>-ból/-ből</td>
<td>out of, out from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sublative</td>
<td>-ra/-re</td>
<td>onto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superessive</td>
<td>(-ö/-e/-ő)-n</td>
<td>on, at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delative</td>
<td>-ról/-ről</td>
<td>off, from, about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allative</td>
<td>-hoz/-hez/-höz</td>
<td>toward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adessive</td>
<td>-nál/-né</td>
<td>near, at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ablative</td>
<td>-tól/-től</td>
<td>(away) from</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Oblique cases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>ending</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dative</td>
<td>-nak/-nek</td>
<td>to, for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instrumental</td>
<td>-val/-vel</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transitive</td>
<td>-vá/-vé</td>
<td>(turning) into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>causal-final</td>
<td>-ért</td>
<td>for the purpose of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>essive-formal</td>
<td>-ként</td>
<td>as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terminative</td>
<td>-ig</td>
<td>until, up to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distributive</td>
<td>(-ö/-e/-ő/-ő)</td>
<td>per, each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-nként</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Less productive cases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>ending</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>temporal</td>
<td>-kor</td>
<td>at (plus time expression)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distributive-temporal</td>
<td>(-ö/-e/-ő)-nta</td>
<td>per, every (plus time expression)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sociative</td>
<td>(-ö/-a/-e/-ő/)</td>
<td>(together) with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-stul/-stül</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>locative</td>
<td>-t/(-ö/-e/-ő)-tt</td>
<td>at</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vowel harmony is maintained when suffixing cases. Several cases have a three-way vowel harmony choice (e.g., the allative -hoz/-hez/-höz); most cases, however, have only a front or back vowel choice (e.g., the elative -ból/-ből or the adessive -nál/-nél) and several cases offer no choice in vowel harmony (e.g., the terminative -ig).

The many cases in Hungarian may be divided into three groups: (1) the grammatical cases (nominative and accusative), (2) the locative cases (indicating place and/or motion to or from a place) and (3) the oblique cases (all the rest). All the locative and oblique cases will be referred to by both their name and shape (e.g., ‘adessive -nál/-nél”).

In addition to the productive cases, there are several more unproductive cases found in only limited use. These are dealt with at the end of the chapter.

### 6.1 Grammatical cases

#### 6.1.1 Nominative

The nominative is the ‘zero’ case, i.e., there is no case-marking on the word. It is the citation form for nouns and adjectives in the dictionary.

##### 6.1.1.1 Subjects are in the nominative case.

**Elindult a vonat.**  
The train departed.

**A lányok az egyetemen találkoztak.**  
The girls met at the university.

##### 6.1.1.2 The nominative case is used as a modifier of quantity.

**Egy korsó sört rendelt.**  
She ordered a mug of beer.

**Egy fej salátát kellett vennem.**  
I had to buy a head of lettuce.

**Megivott egy csésze teát.**  
He drank a cup of tea.
The objects of most postpositions are in the nominative. (See section 9.4 for exceptions.)

A függöny mögött találtam egy ceruzát.
I found a pencil behind the curtain.

Betette a táskát az asztal alá.
She put her bag down under the table.

If, in a possessive construction, the possessor immediately precedes the possessed item, the possessor may be in the nominative case. (See chapter 8 for complete rules on possession.)

Elkértem Zsuzsa tollát.
I asked for Zsuzsa’s pen.

Kíváncsi volt a gyerek véleményére.
He was interested in the child’s opinion.

Some time expressions use the nominative case.

Time expressions ending in the word nap ‘day’:

Minden nap/egész nap/vasárnap tanul.
She studies every day/all day/on Sunday.

Time expressions of ‘ago’ and ‘since’ formed with the possessive:

Már három hete van itt. He’s been here for three weeks already.

Hét hónapja utazott el. He left seven months ago.

Accusative: -t

Formation

The accusative -t is attached in much the same way as the plural -k with one difference: within the group of regular nouns there is a division.
Regular nouns ending in the consonants j, l, ly, n, ny, r, s, sz, z, zs require no linking vowel when suffixing the accusative case. Regular nouns ending in any other consonant still require the linking vowel o/e/ö.

The table opposite gives the accusative for the different noun stem types. The plural nominative forms are provided here to illustrate the similarities and differences in suffixing (note that the only difference is found where the regular nouns require no linking vowel).

When suffixing the accusative case to a plural noun, the linking vowel a/e is always required.

### Usage

The accusative case marks the direct object of the verb.

- **Felolvastam a leveleket az apámnak.**
  I read the letters to my father.

- **Jó napot kívánok.**
  Good day! (I wish you a good day.)

- **Meleg ruhát vettünk fel.**
  We put on warm clothes.

The accusative case may also be used in some time expressions:

- **Egy hetet töltöttünk a Balatonon.**
  We spent a week at the Balaton.

The accusative may modify a verb:

- **Nagyot sóhajtott.**
  He gave a big sigh.

- **Jót aludtak.**
  They slept well.

---

2 Note that it does not matter what the final consonant is for low vowel or fleeting vowel words – they always require a linking vowel.
Accusative case suffixing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun stem types</th>
<th>Nominative singular</th>
<th>Accusative singular</th>
<th>Nominative plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stems ending in la or e:</td>
<td>lamp</td>
<td>lámpa</td>
<td>lámpák</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cup</td>
<td>csésze</td>
<td>csészék</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stems ending in woman</td>
<td>nő</td>
<td>nőt</td>
<td>nők</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other vowels</td>
<td>car</td>
<td>kocsi</td>
<td>kocsik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>boat</td>
<td>hajó</td>
<td>hajók</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gate</td>
<td>kapu</td>
<td>kapuk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>needle</td>
<td>tű</td>
<td>tűk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low vowel nouns</td>
<td>road</td>
<td>út</td>
<td>utat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(lose length)</td>
<td>hand</td>
<td>kéz</td>
<td>kezet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low-vowel nouns</td>
<td>house</td>
<td>ház</td>
<td>házat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(no loss of length)</td>
<td>pen</td>
<td>toll</td>
<td>tollak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>book</td>
<td>könyv</td>
<td>könyvet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>deer</td>
<td>öz</td>
<td>özet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v-stems³</td>
<td>lake</td>
<td>tó</td>
<td>tavat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pipe</td>
<td>cső</td>
<td>csövet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-alom/-elem</td>
<td>reward</td>
<td>jutalom</td>
<td>jutalmat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mystery</td>
<td>rejtelem</td>
<td>rejtelmet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fleeting vowel</td>
<td>bush</td>
<td>bokor</td>
<td>bokrot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strawberry</td>
<td>eper</td>
<td>epret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>tükör</td>
<td>tükröt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regular noun ending in j, l, ly, n, ny, r, s, sz, z, zs</td>
<td>plate</td>
<td>tányér</td>
<td>tányért</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>painting</td>
<td>festmény</td>
<td>festményt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>ismerős</td>
<td>ismerőst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other regular nouns</td>
<td>hat</td>
<td>kalap</td>
<td>kalapot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>chair</td>
<td>szék</td>
<td>széket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fruit</td>
<td>gyümölcs</td>
<td>gyümölcsőt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ Two exceptions are: szó ‘word’ szót (acc.), jó ‘good’ jót (acc.)
6.2 **Locative case system**

The locative cases serve mostly as adverbials and answer the question ‘where’, although they have other semantic uses as well.

### 6.2.1 Formation

The locative cases are attached directly to the end of the word. They may be attached to words already formed for the plural or the possessive. All the locative cases require that words ending in a or e lengthen the vowel to á, é, respectively; for words ending in any other vowel, the cases attach directly with no change in the stem.

With the exception of the superessive case -n, all the locative cases attach directly to stems ending in a consonant without requiring a linking vowel or making any changes in the stem of the word.

The superessive case requires the linking vowel o/e/ö when suffixed to all words ending in a consonant (the superessive makes no distinction between low vowel and regular nouns). For v-stem vocabulary, the v-stem is required; -alom/-elem vocabulary and fleeting vowel words omit the last vowel before suffixing the superessive case.

The table opposite illustrates the suffixing of locative cases with respect to noun type. Because the superessive -n case suffixed differently it is in a column of its own; all other locative cases suffix identically and are represented in the table by the inessive case -ban/-ben.

### 6.2.2 Usage


---

Here, ‘no motion’ means there is no explicit motion to or from a place; there may, however be motion within the space defined under ‘no motion’, e.g.,

* Sétálnak a parkban. They are walking in the park.
### Suffixing of locative cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun stem types</th>
<th>Nominative singular</th>
<th>Superessive (-n)</th>
<th>All other locative cases e.g., (-ban/-ben)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>stems ending in a or e</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lamp</td>
<td>lámpa</td>
<td>lámpán</td>
<td>lámpában</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cup</td>
<td>csésze</td>
<td>csészén</td>
<td>csészében</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>stems ending in other vowels</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woman</td>
<td>nő</td>
<td>nön</td>
<td>nöben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>car</td>
<td>kocsi</td>
<td>kocsin</td>
<td>kocsiban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boat</td>
<td>hajó</td>
<td>hajón</td>
<td>hajóban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gate</td>
<td>kapu</td>
<td>kapun</td>
<td>kapuban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>needle</td>
<td>tű</td>
<td>tűn</td>
<td>tűben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>low-vowel</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>road</td>
<td>út</td>
<td>úton</td>
<td>útban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hand</td>
<td>kéz</td>
<td>kézen</td>
<td>kézben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>and</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>house</td>
<td>ház</td>
<td>házon</td>
<td>házban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>book</td>
<td>könyv</td>
<td>könyvön</td>
<td>könyvben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>regular nouns</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plate</td>
<td>tányér</td>
<td>tányéron</td>
<td>tányérban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chair</td>
<td>szék</td>
<td>széken</td>
<td>székben</td>
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<td>fruit</td>
<td>gyümölcs</td>
<td>gyümölcson</td>
<td>gyümölcson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>v-stems</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>lake</td>
<td>tó</td>
<td>tavon</td>
<td>tóban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pipe</td>
<td>cső</td>
<td>csövön</td>
<td>csőben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>alom/-elem</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reward</td>
<td>jutalom</td>
<td>jutalmon</td>
<td>jutalomban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mystery</td>
<td>rejtelem</td>
<td>rejtelmen</td>
<td>rejtelemben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>fleeting vowel</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bush</td>
<td>bokor</td>
<td>bokron</td>
<td>bokorban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strawberry</td>
<td>eper</td>
<td>epren</td>
<td>eperben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>tükör</td>
<td>tükrön</td>
<td>tükürben</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The case system

Locative system: parameters of motion and space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>motion</th>
<th>no motion</th>
<th>motion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>toward</td>
<td></td>
<td>away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➩ ➩</td>
<td>➩</td>
<td>➩ ➩</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

interior  -ba/-be  -ban/-ben  -ból/-böl

illative  inessive  elative

exterior  -ra/-re  -(o/e/ö) n  -ról/-röl

sublative superessive delative

near      -hoz/-hez/-höz  -nál/-nél  -tól/-töl

allative adessive ablative

6.2.2.1 Interior

The interior set of cases correspond to the English prepositions in, into, out of, from (the inside of). They are used with

(a) geographic names including countries; Angliában ‘in England’ (except Magyarország ‘Hungary’);
(b) most cities outside of Hungary, Párizsból ‘from Paris’;
(c) cities within Hungary whose final consonant is m, n, ny, j, r: Debrecenbe ‘to Debrecen’; Tihanyba ‘to Tihany’;
(d) interiors of objects, buildings, and other spaces; a fiókban ‘in the drawer’, a szívemben ‘in my heart’.

6.2.2.1.1

The illative case -ba/-be is used to express motion to the interior of a place.

Bemegyek a régi házba. I am going into the old house.

Imre elment Olaszországba. Imre went to Italy.

Zsuzsa betett egy tollat a zsebébe. Zsuzsa put a pen into her pocket.
The inessive case -ban/-ben is used to express no motion in(side) a place:

Géza olvas a kertben.  
Géza is reading in the garden.

Kétemeletes házban lakom.  
I live in a two-storey house.

Három könyv van a táskámban.  
There are three books in my bag.

The elative case -ból-/ből is used to express motion out from the interior of a place:

A gyerekek kifutottak az teremből.  
The children run out of the classroom.

Kitéptem egy lapot a füzetemből.  
I tore a page out of my notebook.

Melyik városból jössz?  
From which city are you coming?

The exterior cases correspond to the English prepositions ‘on’, ‘at’, ‘onto’, ‘off’, ‘from (the surface of)’. They are used with

(a) most place names within Hungary (or places that used to be governed by Hungary): Budapesten ‘in Budapest’;
(b) the name of Hungary itself: Magyarországról ‘from Hungary’;
(c) public transportation: villamoson ‘on a tram’;
(d) events: sportmérkőzésen ‘at a sports match’; hangversenyre ‘to a concert’;
(e) surfaces and open spaces: az asztalra ‘onto the table’, falon ‘on a wall’, jégen ‘on ice’.

The sublative case -ra/-re is used to express motion toward an exterior.

Elmegyünk Budapestre.  
We are going to Budapest.
A táskám leesett a földre. My bag fell to the floor.
Felszállok erre az autóbuszra. I will get on this bus.

6.2.2.2
The superessive case (o/e/ö) is used to express a position on or at an exterior.

Híres egyetemen dolgozunk. We work at a famous university.
Ilona Magyarországon lakik. Ilona lives in Hungary.
A szótár az asztalon van. The dictionary is on the table.

6.2.2.3
The delative case -ról/-ől is used to express motion away from an exterior.

A szótár leesett az asztalról. The dictionary fell off the table.
Tegnap feljöttek Pécsről. They came up from Pécs yesterday.
Levette a hirdetést a falról. She took the advertisement off the wall.

6.2.3 Near
The near cases correspond roughly to the English prepositions ‘near(by)’, ‘at’, ‘with’, ‘toward’, ‘away from’. They are used to express positions at, near, or away from the vicinity of

(a) vertical objects: ajtóhoz ‘toward a door’ a fánál ‘by the tree’;
(b) people: Kingához ‘toward Kinga’;
(c) a person’s home: Dénesnél ‘at Dénes’ place/house’;
(d) a person’s place of business: az orvosnál ‘at the doctor’s office’.

6.2.3.1
The allative case -hoz/-hez/-höz expresses motion toward the vicinity of someone/something.
**Elmentünk a fogorvoshoz.** We went to the dentist’s office.

**Leültünk az asztalhoz.** We sat down at the table.

**Odafutottak a kerítéshez.** They ran up to the fence.

The adessive case -nál/-nél expresses a position near or in the vicinity of someone/something:

**A kulcs Imrénél van.**
Imre has the key. (lit.: The key is by Imre.)

**A kutya az ágynál fekszik.**
The dog is lying near the bed.

**A Kovácséknál voltam két hétig.**
I stayed with the Kovácses for two weeks.

The ablative case -tól/-től expresses motion away from the vicinity of someone/something:

**Erzsébettek kaptam a könyvet.**
I got the book from Erzsébet.

**Boldogan jöttek el az orvostól.**
They came happily from the doctor’s (office).

**Felkeltünk az asztaltól.**
We stood up from the table.

### Non-locative usage of the locative cases

The locative cases may have more abstract meanings as well. They can be used in time expressions and other adverbial, not strictly spatial, expressions. Often, a verb or adjective will require the use of a specific case. Examples of some abstract or metaphoric uses of the locative cases are given below.
6.3.1 Illative -bal/-be

Verbs with the coverb bele ‘into’ take an illative complement:

Belefáradt a munkába. He got tired of the work.
Mária beleszeretett Jánosba. Mária fell in love with János.

6.3.1.2

The illative may be used with a condition somebody gets into:

Az a fiú mindig nagy bajba kerül. That boy always gets into big trouble.
Dühbe jött, mikor meglátta a jegyét. She flew into a rage when she saw her grade.

6.3.2 Inessive -ban/-ben

6.3.2.1

The inessive is used in time expressions:

A születésnapom decemberben van. My birthday is in December.
Melyik évben laktál külföldön? Which year did you live abroad?

6.3.2.2

Some verbs and adjectives require an inessive complement:

Biztos vagy benne? Are you sure of it?
Nem vettünk részt a vitában. We did not take part in the debate.
Hiszel Istenben? Do you believe in God?
Miben vagyunk bűnösek? What are we guilty of?
Rákban halt meg. He died of cancer.
The inessive is used with the condition or state a person is in.

**Bajban vagyunk.** We are in trouble.

**Jóban vagyok a főnökkel.** I’m in good with (I have a good relation with) the boss.

The inessive may express the means by which an action occurs.

**Dollárban fizetnek.** They pay us in dollars.

**Nagy pelyhekben hullott a hó.** The snow fell in large flakes.

---

**Elative** -ból/-ből

The elative may mark the origin of something – whether concerning persons, material or time.

**Fizikus lett a bátyámból.** My elder brother became a physicist.

**Milyen anyagból készült a ruha?** What material is the dress made of?

**Melyik korból való az a festmény?** What era is that painting from?

The elative may mark the cause or manner of an action.

**Nemcsak szerelemből házasodnak az emberek.** It is not only out of love that people get married.

**Tévedésemből vettem ezt a könyvet.** I bought this book by mistake.

**Csak kíváncsiságból kérdeztem.** I only asked out of curiosity.
The elative has a partitive use.

Csak keveset evett a halból, mert nem ízlett neki.
He only ate a little of the fish because he didn’t like it.

Kérsz még a süteményből?
Would you like some more pastry?

**6.3.4 Sublative -ra/-re**

The sublative is used in time expressions to indicate the time by which an action is done.

Hat órára jön haza.  
He’ll be home by six o’clock.

Jövő hétre lehül az idő.  
The weather will cool down by next week.

Mához egy évre megint találkozunk.  
We’ll meet again a year from today.

Some verbs (especially those with the coverb rá) and adjectives require a sublative complement.

Büszke a gyerekeire.  
She is proud of her children.

Kíváncsi vagyok Szabó új filmjére.  
I am curious about Szabó’s new movie.

Nem emlékszel rám?  
Don’t you remember me?

Mire van szükségetek?  
What do you need?

Sokat gondol a barátnőjére.  
He thinks about his girlfriend a lot.

Ránéztem az ablakra.  
I glanced at the window.

A rendőr rámutatott a jelzőtáblára.  
The policeman pointed to the sign.
The sublative may be used to mark the result or goal of an action.

Apró darabokra vágtam a hagymát.
I cut the onion into small pieces.

Magyarra fordította a könyvet.
He translated the book into Hungarian.

Könnykre fakadt, mikor megnyerte a lottót.
She burst into tears when she won the lottery.

Fehérre festettünk minden falat.
We painted every wall white.

The superessive is used with the days of the week and other time expressions.

Minden héten találkoznak.
They meet every week.

Hétfőn, szerdán és pénteken jár a francia órára.
He goes to French class on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The following postpositions require that the noun preceding them be in the superessive case.

alul below        fölül above        kívül outside, besides
át across        innen this side of     túl beyond
belül within     keresztül across      végig along, to the end

Egy órán belül készült el a leves.
The soup was ready within an hour.

Imrén kívül senki sem volt pontos.
Besides Imre, nobody was on time.
Many verbs (especially those using the above postpositions as coverbs) take a superessive complement.

**Melyik terven dolgozol?**
Which plan are you working on?

**Sokáig gondolkozott az ügyön.**
She thought about the matter for a long time.

**Átment az utcán.**
He walked across the street.

**6.3.6 Delative -ról/-ről**

**6.3.6.1**

The delative often has the meaning ‘about’.

**Nem szeret magáról beszélni.**
She doesn’t like to talk about herself.

**Miről szól a cikk?**
What is the article about?

**Nem tudnak sokat Budapestről.**
They don’t know much about Budapest.

**6.3.6.2**

The delative is found in adverbial constructions with the sublative -ra/-re.

- **napról napra** from day to day
- **szóról szóra** word by word
- **időről időre** from time to time
- **magyarról angolra** from Hungarian into English
6.3.7 Allative -hoz/-hez/-höz

6.3.7.1
The allative is used with expressions of attaching something to, adding to, or communicating to someone or something (especially with verbs having the coverb hozzá).

Hozzá szólt a kérdéshez. He addressed the question.
Melyik párhuz akarsz csatlakozni? Which party do you want to join?
Mit iszol a vacsorához? What will you drink with dinner?

6.3.7.2
Some verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and postpositions require an allative complement.

Mihez van kedved ma? What are you in the mood for today?
Közel lakik a Nemzeti Múzeumhoz. She lives near the National Museum.
Nem értek a geometriához. I am not good at geometry.
Udvarias volt hozzá. He was polite to me.
Nagyon hasonlít az anyjához. She resembles her mother very much.

6.3.8 Adessive -nál/-nél

6.3.8.1
The adessive is used in comparative constructions:

Dénes magasabb Péternél. Dénes is taller than Péter.
Az idei barack édessebb a tavalyinál. This year’s apricots are sweeter than last year’s.
The adessive combines with plural pronouns to mean ‘in one’s country or part of the world’.

Nálunk sokan csak kint dohányoznak, nálatok hogy van?
Where I live many people smoke only outside, how is it in your country?

The adessive may be used in expressions of a person’s condition or state.

Nem vagy észnél! You are out of your mind!
Most már magánál van. He’s conscious now.

Ablative -tól/-től

The ablative is used with verbs expressing fear or separation.

Nem félek a kutyáktól. I am not afraid of dogs.
Megijedtünk a csontváztól. We were frightened by the skeleton.
Elváltak egymástól. They separated from each other.

The ablative is used to express the origin of an object or action in time and space (often used in conjunction with the terminative -ig).

Kettőtől otthon leszek.
I’ll be home from two o’clock on.

Reggeltől estig dolgozik.
He works from morning till night.

Kitől kaptad a virágokat?
From whom did you get the flowers?

Budapesttől Párizsig beszélgettek a vonaton.
They talked on the train from Budapest to Paris.
The ablative may be used to denote the cause of an action.

- Reszket a hidegtől. She is shivering from the cold.
- Kivagyok a sok gondtől. I am worn out with all the worry.
- Elájult a hőségtől. He fainted from the heat.

6.4 Oblique cases

In addition to the locative cases, there are cases denoting the English prepositions ‘for’, ‘with’, ‘as’, ‘until’, ‘per’, ‘at’ (with respect to time) and more.

6.4.1 Formation

The oblique cases are added to stems in the same way as the inessive with the following exceptions:

(a) The initial v- of the instrumental -val/-vel and translative -vá/-vé always assimilates to the stem-final consonant to which it suffixes.

- víz + vé → vízzé (turning) into water
- bor + vá → borrá (turning) into wine
- barátok + val → barátokkal with friends
- barátom + val → barátommal with my friend

If the consonant to which the case assimilates is a digraph, only the first letter of the digraph is doubled.

- lány + val → lánnyal with (a) girl
- ész + vel → ésszel with (a) mind

If the consonant to which the case assimilates is a double consonant, the resulting tri-consonant cluster is simplified to a double consonant.

- toll + val → tollal with (a) pen
- orr + val → orral with (a) nose

(b) The causal-final -ért, the terminative -ig, the essive-formal -ként, and the temporal -kor have no vowel harmony counterparts.
(c) The temporal -kor and the essive-formal -ként attach to words ending in a and e without lengthening the vowel.

(d) The distributive -nként, the sociative -stul/-stül, and the distributive-temporal -nta\(^5\) require a linking vowel when suffixing to stems ending in consonants. This is the same linking vowel required when forming the plural; all the stem alternations effected in the plural are found when forming these cases as well.

### 6.4.2 Usage of oblique cases

#### 6.4.2.1 Dative -nak/-nek

The dative case marks the indirect object or the beneficiary of an action.

- **Csillának adtam egy könyvet.**
  I gave a book to Csilla.

- **Megmutatja Nórának a fényképeit.**
  She shows her pictures to Nóra.

- **Kinek telefonálsz?**
  Whom are you calling?

#### 6.4.2.1.2

Many verbs and some adjectives take a dative complement.

- **Fekete Gyulának hívják.**
  His name is Gyula Fekete.

- **Fáradtnak látszol.**
  You look tired.

- **Jó barátomnak tartalak.**
  I consider you a good friend.

- **Unalmasnak találtam a cikket.**
  I found the article boring.

\(^5\) hó ‘month’, havonként, havonta ‘monthly’, ‘per month’ are exceptions.
Ez a lakás nem alkalmas nagy családnak.
This apartment does not suit a large family.

6.4.2.1.3

The dative is also used in impersonal constructions (see section 17.7 for more on impersonal constructions):

Gábornak tanulnia kell ma este.
Gábor must study this evening. (lit.) It is necessary for Gábor to study this evening.

Zsőfiának fontos minden nap zongoráznia.
It is important for Zsófia to play the piano every day.

6.4.2.1.4

The dative marks the possessor in ‘have’ constructions (see section 17.4 for more on ‘have’ constructions):

Gyulának két húga van.
Gyula has two younger sisters.

Láza van a lányomnak.
My daughter has a fever.

6.4.2.1.5

The dative may mark the possessor in possessive constructions (see chapter 8 on possessives for discussion of obligatory and optional uses of the dative).

Ennek az árát nem tudom.
I don’t know the price of this/its price.

Annak a férfinak a kocsija eladó.
That man’s car is for sale.

Kinek a labdája ez?
Whose ball is this?

Gábornak fáj a lába.
Gábor’s leg hurts.
6.4.2.2 Instrumental -val/-vel

6.4.2.2.1

The instrumental denotes the person, material, manner or means of transportation with which an action is done.

\textbf{Inkább ceruzával írok, mint tollal.} \hspace{1cm} I prefer to write with a pencil than a pen.

\textbf{Eljössz velem?} \hspace{1cm} Are you coming with me?

\textbf{Már régóta jár Évával.} \hspace{1cm} He’s been going with Éva for a long time.

\textbf{Busszal vagy metróval menjünk?} \hspace{1cm} Shall we go by bus or metro?

\textbf{Örömmel!} \hspace{1cm} With pleasure! (I’d be delighted.)

6.4.2.2.2

The degree of comparison and other measures are expressed with the instrumental.

\textbf{Imre két évvel fiatalabb, mint Kornél.} \hspace{1cm} Imre is two years younger than Kornél.

\textbf{Régen sokkal hosszabb volt a hajam.} \hspace{1cm} My hair was much longer in the old days.

\textbf{Vizet iszol? Én is kérek egy pohárral.} \hspace{1cm} Are you drinking water? I would also like a glassful.

6.4.2.2.3

The agent of causative constructions is in the instrumental.

\textbf{A szabóval varrattam egy új öltönyt.} \hspace{1cm} I had the tailor sew me a new suit.

\textbf{Jánossal hívattunk egy taxit.} \hspace{1cm} We had János call a taxi.
Many verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and the two postpositions együtt ‘together’ and szemben ‘across’ take an instrumental complement.

**Mikor találkoztok az elnökkel?**
When are you meeting the president?

**A láda tele van régi ruhával.**
The chest is full of old clothes.

**A házzal szemben van egy gyönyörű park.**
There is a beautiful park across from the house.

**6.4.2.3 Translative -vál/-vé**

The translative has a fairly limited use; it combines with the verbs denoting a change in state, e.g., válik ‘become’, ‘turn into’, lesz ‘become’, tesz ‘make’ and változtat ‘change’ to express what something or someone changes into.

**Hallgatag emberré vált, miután meghalt a felesége.**
He become a quiet man after his wife died.

**Ezt a kunyhót valódi palotává változtatták.**
They have changed this shack into a real palace.

**6.4.2.4 Causal-final -ért**

The causal-final denotes cause, reason or purpose; it is often translated as ‘for’.

**Mindent megtesz a családjáért.**
He does everything for his family.

**Elküldtem a boltba kenyérért.**
I sent him to the store for bread.

**Zsuzsa eljön a repülőtérré értem.**
Zsuzsa is coming for (to meet) me at the airport.
It is used in financial transactions, marking either the price or merchandise – whichever is in the ‘for’ phrase in English.

**Hatezer forintot fizetett a cipőért.**
She paid six thousand forints for the shoes.

**Hatezer forintért vette a cipőt.**
She bought the shoes for six thousand forints.

**Mennyiért lehet kapni egy jó üveg bort?**
How much (money) can you get a good bottle of wine for?

The demonstrative pronoun in the causal-final case azért ‘for the (following) reason’ introduces clauses of purpose.

**Azért megyünk a hegyekbe, hogy végre pihenhessünk egy kicsit.**
The reason we are going to the mountains is so we can finally rest a bit.

**Azért tanul angolul, hogy többet keressen a munkahelyén.**
The reason he is studying English is to earn more money at work.

The essive-formal means ‘as’ and can be used instead of a clause introduced by mint ‘as’.

**Egy évig tanárként dolgozott.**
She worked as a teacher for a year.

**Egy évig dolgozott, mint tanár.**
"  

**Rabszolgaként bánnak velem.**
They treat me like a slave.

**Úgy bánnak velem, mintha rabszolga lennék.**
They treat me as if I were a slave.
Terminative -ig

The terminative is used in both temporal and spatial expressions to denote ‘until’. It is often paired with the ablative -tól/-től.

Elkísért bennünket a sarokig. He accompanied us to the corner.

Nyolctól ötig dolgozik. She works from eight until five.

Az út csak egy óráig tartott. The trip lasted only an hour.

Distributive -nként

The distributive expresses a regular division and can be translated as ‘per’, ‘by’, ‘every’.

Mennyibe kerül a vacsora fejenként? How much does the dinner cost per person?

Óránként fizetnek. They pay by the hour.

Egyenként léptek be a terembe. They entered the hall one by one.

Less productive cases

The following cases are limited in use.

Temporal -kor

This denotes ‘at’ for time expressions only.

Hat órakor jön haza. He is coming home at six o’clock.

Szép, ha karácsonykor esik a hó. It’s pretty when it snows at Christmas.

Éjfélkor szoktam lefeküdni. I usually go to bed at midnight.
6.5.2 Distributive-temporal -nta/-nte

This suffix attaches to words denoting time expressions to mean ‘per’, ‘every’.

Hetente háromszor van magyar óra.
Hungarian class is three times per week.

Óránta közlik a híreket.
They broadcast the news every hour.

6.5.3 Sociative -stul/-stül

The sociative denotes ‘with’ with people or objects closely associated with each other.

Mindig családostul utazik.
He always travels with his family.

Mindenestül érkezett meg.
She arrived with all her belongings/bag and baggage.

6.5.4 Locative -t/-ott/-ett/-ött

A few towns and several words may use this locative case to mean ‘in’. 6

Pécsett in Pécs
Győrött in Győr
Kolozsvárt or Kolozsvárott in Kolozsvár

oldal side oldalt sideways
egyenes straight egyenest straight ahead

---

6 This is the same ending as found in some adverbs of place: itt ‘here’, ott ‘there’, másutt ‘elsewhere’; and postpositions: alatt ‘under’, előtt ‘in front of’, etc.
The above examples illustrate how cases can have several meanings; of course words and phrases change in meaning when adding different cases; this is comparable to the use of different prepositional phrases in English.

- **Hiszek Jánosban.** I believe in János.
- **Hiszek Jánosnak.** I believe János.
- **Istvánról beszélek.** I am speaking about István.
- **Istvánnal beszélek.** I am speaking with István.

In the preceding examples, the meaning of the verb doesn’t change, only the complement of the verb. Often, however, the meaning of a verb can change depending upon which case it governs.

- **Nem értem a leckét.** I don’t understand the lesson.
- **Nem értek a fizikához.** I am no good at physics.
- **Sokáig tartott az előadás.** The lecture lasted a long time.
- **Sokáig tartotta a síró gyereket.** He held the crying child for a long time.
- **Attól tartok, hogy rossz jegyet fogok kapni.** I’m afraid I will get a bad grade.

Because the meaning of the verb can change so much, it is important to use a dictionary carefully; a good one will list the meanings of a verb (or other expression) according to the case it governs.

### 6.7 Plural declension

The plural declension is arrived at by simply forming the plural first and then adding the case suffix to the plural form. A case suffix is added directly to the plural form with the following exceptions:

(a) The linking vowel a/e is required after the plural form when suffixing the accusative case.

(b) The linking vowel o/e/o is required after the plural when suffixing the superessive case -n.

(c) The temporal -kor, distributive -nként, distributive-temporal -nta/-nte, and sociative -stul/-stül are not used in the plural.
### Examples of the plural paradigm

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#### 6.8 Full declension of select nouns

For declensions of all noun types, see appendix 2.
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<td>családoktól</td>
<td>csészétől</td>
<td>csészéktől</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>dative</strong></td>
<td>családnak</td>
<td>családoknak</td>
<td>csészének</td>
<td>csészéknnek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>instrumental</strong></td>
<td>családdal</td>
<td>családokkal</td>
<td>csészével</td>
<td>csészékkel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>translative</strong></td>
<td>családdá</td>
<td>családokká</td>
<td>csészévé</td>
<td>csészékké</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>causal-final</strong></td>
<td>családért</td>
<td>családokért</td>
<td>csészéért</td>
<td>csészékért</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>essive-formal</strong></td>
<td>családként</td>
<td>családokként</td>
<td>csészeként</td>
<td>csészékkként</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>terminative</strong></td>
<td>családig</td>
<td>családokig</td>
<td>csészéig</td>
<td>csészékgig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>distributive</strong></td>
<td>családonként</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>csészénként</td>
<td>——</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>temporal</strong></td>
<td>——</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>——</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sociative</strong></td>
<td>családostul</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>csészéstül</td>
<td>——</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>locative</strong></td>
<td>(Kolozsvárt)</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>——</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pronouns replace nouns; personal pronouns refer to people; demonstrative pronouns usually refer to things. Reflexive and reciprocal pronouns refer back to the subject(s) of a sentence. The personal pronouns of Hungarian include both familiar and several formal forms. The demonstrative pronouns have important discourse functions not found in English.

# 7.1 Personal pronouns

The formation and usage of pronouns in the grammatical cases is different from their formation and usage from the locative and oblique cases.

## 7.1.1 Nominative and accusative cases

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you (sg.)²</td>
<td>she/he</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>you (pl.)</td>
<td>they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nom.</td>
<td>én</td>
<td>te</td>
<td>ō</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>ti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acc.</td>
<td>engem</td>
<td>téged</td>
<td>ŏt</td>
<td>minket</td>
<td>titeket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(engemet)</td>
<td>(tégedet)</td>
<td></td>
<td>bennünket</td>
<td>benneteket</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first and second person singular pronouns have the option of omitting the accusative ending; it is common to do so – especially in the Budapest dialect. The first and second persons plural have two accusative

¹ Adverbial pronouns are treated in chapter 11.
² The second person forms discussed here are familiar forms. The polite pronouns are discussed in 7.2.
forms; they are used in free variation with no difference in style or meaning. All first and second person pronoun direct objects are considered indefinite.

Hungarian sentences do not require the use of a personal pronoun in the nominative or accusative case unless the pronoun is emphasized, contrasted, or referred to specifically. Otherwise it is most often omitted. Third person direct objects are implicit in the definite conjugation of the verb; it is common however to use the pronoun őket and omit the pronoun Őt (unless otherwise emphasized).

As there is no gender marking in Hungarian, there is only one pronoun for he and she. In the nominative case, the third person pronouns can refer only to people; in the accusative, őket may refer to animals or objects, though Őt is usually reserved for humans only; non-human direct objects may be referred to by the demonstrative pronouns, azt, azokat, ezt, ezeket.

Nominative pronouns:

Én egy sört fogok rendelni, te mit iszol?
I will order a beer, what will you have?

Mi angolul beszélünk, Ők meg magyarul.
We speak English and they speak Hungarian.

Ő is, ti is jöttök szombaton.
Both he and you are coming on Saturday.

Accusative pronouns:

Látsz engem?
Do you see me?

Jánost is, téged is látlok.
I see both you and János.

Ott van Kati, most Őt is látom.
There is Kati, now I see her, too.

Várom.
I am waiting for him/her/it.

Szeretem (Őt).
I love him/her.

Szeretem őket.
I love them.
Mikor hívsz meg minket/bennünket vacsorára?
When will you invite us to dinner?

Holnap elviszlek titeket/benneteket a moziba.
I'll take you (pl.) to the movies tomorrow.

Because pronouns are often omitted, in the absence of context sentences with no overt direct objects are ambiguous in meaning.

Látsz?
Do you see me? Do you see us? Do you have the ability to see?

Látod?
Do you see him/her/it? Do you see them?

Várunk.
We are waiting for you (singular or plural). We are waiting.

Várnak.
They are waiting for me/us/you (singular or plural). They are waiting.

7.1.2 Locative and oblique cases

The pronouns of the non-grammatical cases are formed by using the case as a stem and suffixing the possessive endings. Pronominal forms do not exist for all cases; the existing pronominalized case forms are given here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declension of personal pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sg. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sublat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caus.-fin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Also, less colloquially, reám, reád, reá(ja), reánk, reátok, reájuk.
Beszélünk róluk. We are speaking about them.
Hiszek benned. I believe in you.
Rám vársz? Are you waiting for me?
Mikor jöttök hozzánk? When will you come to our place?
Adok neki egy rózsát. I'll give him/her a rose.
Nincs sok pénz nálam. I don’t have much money with me.

Emphasis of the pronominalized cases is obtained by prefixing the nominative pronoun to the case form; the third person plural prefix, however, is ő (without the final k): 4

énbennem, tebenned, őbenne, mibennünk, tibennetek, őbennük, etc.

Terád várok, senki másra.
I am waiting for you and nobody else.

Énnekem küldd el a pénzt, ne a bátyámnak!
Send the money to me, not my brother!

Tiveletek akarok menni!
I want to go with you!

Őbennük egyáltalán nem lehet hinni!
You can not believe in them at all!

7.2 Polite forms of address

7.2.1 Usage

The pronouns te and ti are used to address friends, relatives, children and animals. The pronouns maga (singular) and maguk (plural) are used to address people you are not as familiar with as well as strangers with whom you wish to maintain a reserved but not too formal relation. They can, however, be quite rude or condescending and it is best to wait until someone addresses you as such before using them. The pronouns ön (singular) and önök (plural) are used to address people with whom you wish to maintain a formal relation. In letters, the polite pronouns are

4 Recall that this is also true with the postpositions and possessive constructions.
capitalized. As with all pronouns, when they are subjects or direct objects they may be omitted.

(Maga) milyen könyvet keres?
What kind of book are you (singular) looking for?

(Maguk) felszállnak a buszra?
Are you (plural) getting on the bus?

Kérdezhetek öntől valamit?
May I ask you (singular) a question, sir/ma’am?

Önök ott lesznek a tárgyaláson?
Will you (plural) be at the meeting?

Another common and polite form of address uses no pronoun at all. Instead the person’s name or title is used with the third person conjugations of the verb.

Siet a professzor úr?
Are you in a hurry, professor?

Finally, the use of the verb tetszik (plural: tetszenek) plus the infinitive is a polite form often used by children with adults or by adults with much older adults. It uses no pronouns.

Nem tetszik/tetszenek tudni, mennyi az idő?
Do you (singular/plural) know what time it is?

### 7.2.2 Declension of polite pronouns

The polite pronouns are considered third person pronouns; as such they conjugate with the third person forms of the verb (both singular and plural); when they are direct objects (either overtly stated or implied) they are considered definite (see definite conjugation, section 4.2).

Maga and maguk are identical with the reflexive pronouns and decline as any possessed noun. Ön and önök decline as regular nouns. None of the polite pronouns decline as personal pronouns, rather as nouns.
Declension of polite pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>maga</td>
<td>maguk</td>
<td>ön</td>
<td>önök</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>magát</td>
<td>magukat</td>
<td>önt</td>
<td>önöket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illat.</td>
<td>magába</td>
<td>magukba</td>
<td>önbe</td>
<td>önökbe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iness.</td>
<td>magában</td>
<td>magukban</td>
<td>önből</td>
<td>önökből</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elat.</td>
<td>magából</td>
<td>magukból</td>
<td>önben</td>
<td>önökbőn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sublat.</td>
<td>magára</td>
<td>magukra</td>
<td>önre</td>
<td>önökre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superess.</td>
<td>magán</td>
<td>magukon</td>
<td>önön</td>
<td>önökön</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delat.</td>
<td>magáról</td>
<td>magukról</td>
<td>önről</td>
<td>önökről</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All.</td>
<td>magához</td>
<td>magukhoz</td>
<td>önhöz</td>
<td>önökhöz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adess.</td>
<td>magánál</td>
<td>maguknál</td>
<td>önnél</td>
<td>önöknél</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abl.</td>
<td>magától</td>
<td>maguktól</td>
<td>öntől</td>
<td>önöktől</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>magának</td>
<td>maguknak</td>
<td>önnek</td>
<td>önöknek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>magával</td>
<td>magukkal</td>
<td>önnel</td>
<td>önökkel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caus.-fin.</td>
<td>magáért</td>
<td>magukért</td>
<td>önért</td>
<td>önökért</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2.3 Possessive constructions with polite pronouns

The polite pronouns, in keeping with their 'nounness', form possessives identical to the nominal possessive constructions:

- **your (sg.) book**: a maga könyve ~ magának a könyve
  az ön könyve ~ önnek a könyve

- **your (pl.) book**: a maguk könyve ~ maguknak a könyve
  az önök könyve ~ önöknek a könyve

- **your (sg.) books**: a maga könyvei ~ magának a könyvei
  az ön könyvei ~ önnek a könyvei

- **your (pl.) book**: a maguk könyvei ~ maguknak a könyvei
  az önök könyvei ~ önöknek a könyvei
7.3 Reflexive pronouns

The reflexive pronouns are used when the subject is referred to again in the same clause. It translates as *myself, yourself, himself/herself/oneself*, etc. Some idioms require the use of the reflexive pronoun where English does not.

The reflexive pronouns are the possessive forms of a stem *mag*; as such they attach suffixes as any possessed noun and are considered definite when a direct object. It is common in the Budapest dialect to omit the accusative endings on the *magam* and *magad* forms.\(^5\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declension of reflexive pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sg.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sublat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caus.-fin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{5}\) Recall that this is true of the first and second person singular personal pronouns as well.
Jól érezzük magunkat ebben a városban.
We feel (ourselves) comfortable in this city.

Vidd el magaddal a pénzt!
Take the money with you.

Ilona nem szeret magáról beszélni.
Ilona doesn’t like to speak about herself.

7.4 Reciprocal pronoun

The reciprocal pronoun is egymás and is translated as ‘each other’, ‘one another’. The same pronoun is used regardless of person. Egymás declines as a regular noun; when it is the direct object, it is considered definite.

Gyakran látogatjuk egymást. We visit each other often.
Egymás mellett ülnek. They are sitting next to each other.
Sokat várunk egymástól. We expect a lot of each other.

7.5 Possessive pronouns

Possessive pronouns translate as ‘mine’, ‘yours’, ‘his/hers’, etc. In Hungarian forms exist for plural as well as singular possession. They must always be preceded by the definite article. Possessive pronouns decline as any possessed noun; the possessive endings for polite pronouns are the same as those for regular nouns (see section 8.8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possessor</th>
<th>Singular possession</th>
<th>Plural possession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mine</td>
<td>az enyém</td>
<td>az enyém ~ az enyémek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yours (te)</td>
<td>a tied (tiéd)</td>
<td>a tieid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his/hers</td>
<td>az övé</td>
<td>az övéi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yours (maga)</td>
<td>a magáé</td>
<td>a magáéi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yours (ön)</td>
<td>az öné</td>
<td>az önéi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ours</td>
<td>a mienk (miénk)</td>
<td>a mieink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yours (ti)</td>
<td>a tietek (títeke)</td>
<td>a tieitek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theirs</td>
<td>az övék</td>
<td>az övéik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yours (maguk)</td>
<td>a maguké</td>
<td>a magukéi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yours (önök)</td>
<td>az önöké</td>
<td>az önökéi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Megmutattam neked az én fényképeimet, most mutasd meg a tieidet!
I showed you my pictures, now you show me yours.

Ezek a könyvek az övéi.
These books are his/hers.

Ez a tied?
Is this yours (singular)?

A ti lakásotokban öt szoba van, a mienkben csak négy.
In your apartment there are five rooms, in ours there are only four.

7.6 Demonstrative pronouns

Hungarian has demonstrative pronouns to replace nouns, adjectives, number and adverbs. (The adverbial pronouns are treated in chapter 11 on adverbs.)

7.6.1 Ez/Az

The demonstratives ez ‘this’ and az ‘that’ have some anomalies in their declension.

In the singular declension of the non-grammatical cases, the final -z of the demonstrative pronouns assimilates to the initial consonant of most suffixed cases.

Because the initial v- of the instrumental case (-val/-vel) regularly assimilates to the consonants to its left, two forms exist for the demonstrative pronoun in the singular of this case.

Note the irregularity (-dd-) in the terminative -ig case formation.

The plurals and accusatives are formed regularly.
### Declension of demonstrative pronouns \textit{ez}, \textit{az}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>\textit{ez}</td>
<td>\textit{az}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>\textit{ezt}</td>
<td>\textit{azt}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illat.</td>
<td>\textit{ebbe}</td>
<td>\textit{abba}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iness.</td>
<td>\textit{ebben}</td>
<td>\textit{abban}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elat.</td>
<td>\textit{ebből}</td>
<td>\textit{abból}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sublat.</td>
<td>\textit{erre}</td>
<td>\textit{arra}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superess.</td>
<td>\textit{ezen}</td>
<td>\textit{azon}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delat.</td>
<td>\textit{erről}</td>
<td>\textit{arról}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All.</td>
<td>\textit{ehhez}</td>
<td>\textit{ahhoz}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adess.</td>
<td>\textit{ennél}</td>
<td>\textit{annál}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abl.</td>
<td>\textit{ettől}</td>
<td>\textit{attól}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>\textit{ennek}</td>
<td>\textit{annak}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>\textit{ezzel, evvel}</td>
<td>\textit{azzal, avval}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caus.-fin.</td>
<td>\textit{ezért}</td>
<td>\textit{azért}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termin.</td>
<td>\textit{eddig}</td>
<td>\textit{addig}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transl.</td>
<td>\textit{ezzé}</td>
<td>\textit{azzé}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ess.-form.</td>
<td>\textit{ekként}</td>
<td>\textit{akként}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temp.</td>
<td>\textit{ekkor}</td>
<td>\textit{akkor}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7.6.2 Usage of \textit{ez} and \textit{az}

\textbf{7.6.2.1}

The demonstrative pronouns may be used to replace a noun or have a deictic function.

\textbf{Azt láttam.} \quad \text{I saw that/it.}

\textbf{Ezeket megvesszük.} \quad \text{We will buy these (things).}
Demonstrative pronouns may also modify nouns. As modifiers the demonstrative pronoun must (1) agree in case and number with the noun it is modifying and (2) the noun must always be immediately followed by the definite article.

Azt a filmet akarom megnézni.
I want to watch that movie.

Ennek a lánynak fekete a haja.
This girl’s hair is black.

Erré a buszra szállunk fel.
We are getting on this bus.

Azokról az emberekről beszéltünk.
We were talking about those people.

Whether used as a modifier or a noun replacement, the demonstrative pronoun is considered definite when it is the direct object.

A more literary demonstrative pronoun is e. This pronoun is used only attributively. Unlike its regular counterpart ez, it does not decline nor is the noun it modifies preceded by the definite article.

E házban lakott az egész család.
The entire family lived in this house.

E nagyszerű lovon ült a herceg.
The prince sat on this magnificent horse.

Demonstrative pronouns may also combine with the prefix ugyan- to connote ‘the same’. As with the unprefix forms, they can replace nouns or modify them.

János megnézte a Szerelem című filmet. Ugyanezt láttam én is.
János saw the movie titled ‘Love’. I saw the same one.

Ugyanazt a térképet vettem meg, mint te.
I bought the same map as you.
7.6.3 Adjectival demonstrative pronouns

7.6.3.1

The following pronouns can modify nouns or replace adjectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ilyen⁶</td>
<td>such, this kind</td>
<td>olyan⁶</td>
<td>such, that kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ugyanilyen</td>
<td>the same kind</td>
<td>ugyanolyan</td>
<td>the same kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(as this)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(as that)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>efféle,</td>
<td>this sort of</td>
<td>afféle,</td>
<td>that sort of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilyenféle</td>
<td></td>
<td>olyanféle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ekkora</td>
<td>this big</td>
<td>akkora</td>
<td>that big, so big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ugyanekkora</td>
<td>the same size</td>
<td>uganakkora</td>
<td>the same size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(as this)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(as that)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ilyen az élet.
Such is life.

Olyanokat tud mondani, hogy nem hiszek a fülemnek.
She says such things, that I can’t believe my ears.

Akkora a háza, mint egy kastély.
Her house is as big as a castle.

Ugyanekkora házat vettem én is.
I bought a house the same size.

7.6.3.2

The pronouns ilyesmi ‘such a thing (as this)’ and olyasmi ‘such a thing (as that)’ are demonstrative pronouns. They are very common in colloquial usage and decline as regular nouns.

Illyesmit soha életemben nem hallottam.
I never heard such a thing in my life.

Nem szokott olyasmiket mondani.
She doesn’t usually say things like that.

⁶ Less colloquial forms include ily, emilyen ‘such’, ‘this kind’ and oly, amolyan ‘such’, ‘that kind’.

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7.6.4 **Numerical demonstrative pronouns**

These demonstrative pronouns replace expressions of quantity.

- **ennyi** this much/many
- **annyi** so/that much/many
- **ugyanennyi** this same amount/
- **ugyanannyi** that same amount/
- number

Én ugyanannyit fizettem az autóért, mint te.
I paid as much for the car as you did.

Sohasem láttam ennyi embert egy helyen!
I have never seen this many people in one place!

7.7 **Interrogative pronouns**

7.7.1

The interrogative pronouns ki ‘who’ and mi ‘what’ decline exactly as regular nouns. They can be singular or plural. When direct objects, they are considered indefinite.

- **Kit láttál tegnap este az étteremben?**
  Who did you see last night in the restaurant?
- **Mik azok a kezedben?**
  What are those in your hand?
- **Kitől kaptad azt a könyvet?**
  From whom did you receive that book?
- **Miről szól a film?**
  What is the movie about?
- **Kire vártok?**
  Who are you waiting for?

7.7.2

The interrogative pronoun melyik ‘which’ is considered definite when a direct object. Its plural is melyek, and otherwise declines regularly.

- **Melyik tollat kéred?** Which pen would you like?
It can also take the plural possessive suffixes:

- **melyikünk** which of us
- **melyiketek, melyikőtök** which of you
- **melyikük** which of them

**Melyikőtök Kis György?**
Which one of you is György Kis?

### 7.7.3

The adjectival interrogative pronouns are:

- **milyen** what kind of
- **mely** which
- **miféle, mifajta** what sort of
- **mekkora** how large

**Milyen húst veszel ma?** What kind of meat are you buying today?

**Mekkora a lakása?** How big is her apartment?

**Miféle filmet szeret?** What sort of movie do you like?

### 7.7.4

The numerical interrogative pronouns are **mennyi** ‘how much’, **hány** ‘how many’, **hányadik** ‘what ordinal number’. They may either modify nouns or replace numerals.

**Mennyi pénz van nálad?**
How much money do you have on you?

**Mennyibe kerül a vonatjegy?**
How much does the train ticket cost?

**Hány kiló krumplit kér?**
How many kilos of potatoes would you like?

**Hányadik emeleten laknak?**
Which floor (lit., what numbered floor, fourth?, fifth?, etc.) do they live on?
7.8  Relative pronouns

The relative pronouns aki ‘who’, ami ‘what’, ‘which’, ‘that’ decline exactly as their corresponding interrogative pronouns. Amely is another relative pronoun with the same meaning as ami; ami is more common in colloquial speech. When direct objects, these pronouns are always considered indefinite. Relative pronouns are always preceded by a comma.

Ismered a lányt, akiről beszélek?
Do you know the girl (who) I’m talking about?

Elolvastam a könyvet, amit küldtél nekem.
I read the book that you sent me.

A kedvenc szobrom, amelyet Varga Imre alkotott,
Óbudán áll.
My favorite statue, which Imre Varga sculpted, is in Óbuda.

Additional relative pronouns are formed by prefixing a- to the interrogative pronoun; they decline as their corresponding pronouns do: amelyik, amilyen, amekkora, ahány, amennyi.

Nem keresünk annyit, amennyit szeretnénk.
We do not earn as much as we would like.

Nem ismered a színdarabot, amelyikről beszélek?
Don’t you know the play which I am talking about?

7.9  Cataphoric use of pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns (of nouns, adjectives and number) are commonly used cataphorically, i.e., to refer ahead or refer back to something previously mentioned. Most commonly, the back vowel forms (az, olyan, annyi, etc.) refer to a later, forthcoming clause; the front vowel forms (ez, ilyen, ennyi, etc.) refer to an earlier clause, sentence or utterance. English does not have a close equivalent to these pronouns; they are often left untranslated or another circumlocution is employed. Their importance in clear Hungarian prose cannot be underestimated.

János nem szerette azt, hogy beszéltek róla. Ezt én sem szeretem.
János didn’t like (the fact) that they were talking about him. I don’t like it either.
I am glad (of the fact) that I can go home for Christmas.

He won the lottery and that is when the trouble started.

She has so many shoes that they don’t fit in the closet.

Indefinite pronouns

Indefinite pronouns are formed by adding the prefix vala- to the interrogatives.

nouns:
- valami: something
- valaki: someone
- valamelyik: one or the other

adjectives:
- valamilyen: some kind of
- valamiféle: some kind of
- valamekkora: of some size

numerical expressions
- valamennyi\(^7\): some amount of
- valahány: some number of

Other indefinite pronouns are formed by attaching the prefixes akár- ‘(just) any’, ‘no matter (who, what,’ etc.), bár ‘any’ to the interrogative pronouns.

No matter what you say, I’m leaving tomorrow.

Which CD would you like to listen to? Any one at all, it’s all the same to me.

\(^7\) valamennyi, paradoxically, also means ‘every’, ‘all’: Valamennyien jöttek. ‘Everyone came.’
There can be a slight difference in the meaning between the two prefixes:

**Akárki jöhet a konferenciára.**  
**Bárki jöhet a konferenciára.**

Anyone may come to the conference.

The first sentence has the meaning that any type of individual may come to the conference; the second that the conference is open to all, i.e., the first sentence says more about the pronoun subject, the second says more about the whole situation.

### 7.11 Negative and universal pronouns

The negative pronouns are formed by attaching the prefix se-/sem- to the interrogative pronoun. The universal pronouns are usually formed by prefixing the word *minden*. There are several exceptions in prefixing as the table below shows. The negative and universal pronouns decline exactly as their corresponding pronouns (except *minden*, which declines as a regular noun).

**nouns:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ki</th>
<th>who</th>
<th>mindenki</th>
<th>everyone</th>
<th>senki</th>
<th>nobody</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mi</td>
<td>what</td>
<td>minden/</td>
<td>everything,</td>
<td>semmi</td>
<td>nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mind</td>
<td>all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>melyik</td>
<td>which</td>
<td>mindegyik</td>
<td>each, every</td>
<td>semelyik</td>
<td>not one</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**adjectives:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>milyen</th>
<th>what kind</th>
<th>semmilyen</th>
<th>no kind</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>miféle</td>
<td>what kind</td>
<td>mindenféle</td>
<td>all kinds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mekkora</td>
<td>how big</td>
<td>semmekora</td>
<td>of no size</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**numerical expression:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mennyi</th>
<th>how much</th>
<th>minden, mind</th>
<th>everything,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| semennyi | none at all | hány | how many |

Double negation is always required in sentences containing a negative pronoun. The negatives nem/ne/nincs can be replaced by sem/se/sincs if a negative pronoun precedes it in the sentence; otherwise, nem/ne/nincs must be used.
Itt mindenki magyarul beszél. Everyone speaks Hungarian here.
Itt senki sem/nem beszél magyarul.
No one speaks Hungarian here.

Nem találkoztam senkivel az úton. I didn’t meet anybody on the trip.
Senkivel nem/sem találkoztam az úton.
I didn’t meet anybody on the trip.

Nincs semmi a szekrényben. There is nothing in the closet.
Semmi nincs/sincs a szekrényben.
There is nothing in the closet.
Hungarian indicates possession with a personal possessive ending attached to the noun. Thus, for example, in the word autóm the ending -m ‘my’ is attached to the word autó ‘car’ to mean ‘my car’. Cases may subsequently follow possessive endings: autóm + ban ‘in my car’. The plural -k may not be used with possessive endings; instead there is a separate plural possessive paradigm which uses the plural marker -i: autóim ‘my cars’.

Although the possessive is usually attached to nouns, it may sometimes attach to adjectives being used as nouns: drága ‘dear’; drágám ‘my dear (one)’.

Nouns marked with a possessive ending are usually preceded by the definite article. Although the definite article is rarely omitted in colloquial speech, it is often omitted in writing – especially at the beginning of sentences.

For emphasis or purposes of contrast, the personal pronoun may precede the possessed word. In this case, the definite article is always used. The personal pronouns are always in the nominative form with one exception: the third person plural pronoun is Ő (not Ők!), i.e., it is identical with the third person singular pronoun.¹ In the following tables the personal pronouns are used for the sake of clarity.

### 8.1 Singular possessive endings

Possessive endings (as with the plural and accusative endings) may effect a change in the word stem and may or may not need a linking vowel when suffixed. The third person endings are the trickiest (and least predictable) to form; the first and second person endings are stable.

¹ Compare with the postpositions and declension of personal pronouns.
8.1.1 Vowel-final stems

For words ending in a vowel, the possessive endings are always

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>my</td>
<td>-m</td>
<td>our</td>
<td>-nk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your (sg.)</td>
<td>-d</td>
<td>your (pl.)</td>
<td>-tok, -tek, -tök</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his/her</td>
<td>-ja, -je</td>
<td>their</td>
<td>-juk, -jük</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For words ending in a or e the vowel is lengthened to á, é, respectively, when adding the possessive ending. Other vowel-final words have no change in the stem.

8.1.2 Consonant-final stems

For words ending in a consonant the possessive endings are somewhat different than for those ending in a vowel.

The same noun classes recognized for the nominative plural must be recognized here. (See section 5.3 for a review of noun classes.) The noun classes determine both the shape of the stem and the linking vowel choice when suffixing the possessive.
stems which require the linking vowel choice a/e:

**low vowel nouns** (both classes: loss of length/no loss of length)
- v-stem (v-stem is required when suffixing possessive)
- -alom/-elem class (omits the last vowel when suffixing)

all other nouns require the linking vowel choice o/e/ö:
- fleeting vowel nouns (omit last vowel when suffixing)
- regular nouns

| Possessive endings for consonant-final stems (V stands for linking vowel) |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| my                          | -Vm              | our              | -unk, -ünk       |
| your (sg.)                  | -Vd              | your (pl.)       | -Vtok, -Vtek, -Vtök |
| his/her                     | -(j)a, -(j)e     | their            | -(j)uk, -(j)üük  |

As the table illustrates, the én, te, and ti forms require a linking vowel (which is determined by stem-type).

- regular noun: **barát** friend a **barátom** my friend
- low vowel noun: **toll** pen a **tollad** your (sg.) pen
- regular noun: **testvér** sibling a **testvéretek** your (pl.) sibling

The **mi** possessive ending begins with a vowel; therefore, no linking vowel is required.

- szomszéd neighbor a **szomszédunk** our neighbor
- hely place a **helyünk** our place

The third person forms do not use a linking vowel; here, however, it must be determined whether the ending includes a j. (Both the third person singular and plural suffixes behave identically, i.e., if one includes the j in the suffix, then so does the other.) There are some rules, tendencies and much free variation in determining the presence or absence of j.

**Rules:**

Words ending in **j, gy, ly, ny, ty, s, sz, z, zs, c, cs** do not take a j (except nagy).
Low vowel words (including v-stems) do not take a j (the exceptions are kád, nád, vad, rúd, lúd, út, kút, föld). Fleeting vowel words do not take a j. Nouns ending in f and ch do take a j.

Tendencies:

Nouns formed with the derivational ending -at/-et rarely take a j. Back vowel words ending in p, t, k, b, d, g usually take a j. Words ending in consonant clusters often take a j. Words ending in h usually do not take a j (exceptions are pléh, sah).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of third person possessives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>festmény painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garázs garage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tál bowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kosár basket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ló horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tükör mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feladat task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>szomszéd neighbor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>barát friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kert garden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Note that these exceptions all end in the dentals d or t; with the exception of hát ‘back’, we may say that all low vowel words ending in d or t require the j-initial third person possessive suffixes. Also note that the words, hid, rúd, lúd, út and kut, which customarily lose length of the vowel when adding the plural, accusative, and first and second person possessive suffixes, do not lose length when adding the third person possessive suffixes.
For any stem-type not described above there is no consistent way to guess whether the third person suffixes include a j or not. In addition, there is free variation in some vocabulary where the suffix takes either the j-initial or the j-less suffix; however, the j-initial suffix is becoming more common in the modern language.

8.1.2.1 Possessive paradigms according to stem-type

### Low vowel possessive singular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(No loss of length)</th>
<th>(Loss of length)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>váll shoulder</td>
<td>könny tear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pohár glass</td>
<td>ész mind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>my my</th>
<th>az én vállam könnyem poharam eszem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>your (sg.)</td>
<td>a te vállad könnyed poharad eszed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his/her</td>
<td>az ő válla könnye pohara esze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our</td>
<td>a mi vállunk könnyünk poharunk eszünk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your (pl.)</td>
<td>a ti vállatok könnyetek poharatok eszetek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their</td>
<td>az ő válluk könnyük poharuk eszük</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### v-stem possessive singular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ló horse</th>
<th>cső pipe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>my my</th>
<th>az én lovam csövem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>your (sg.)</td>
<td>a te lovad csöved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his/her</td>
<td>az ő lova csöve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our</td>
<td>a mi lovunk csövünk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your (pl.)</td>
<td>a ti lovatok csövetek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their</td>
<td>az ő lovuk csövük</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### -alom/-elem stems possessive singular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>jutalom</th>
<th>érzelem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>my</td>
<td>az én</td>
<td>jutalmam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your (sg.)</td>
<td>a te</td>
<td>jutalma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his/her</td>
<td>az ő</td>
<td>jutalmunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our</td>
<td>a mi</td>
<td>jutalmatok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your (pl.)</td>
<td>a ti</td>
<td>jutalmuk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Fleeting vowel possessive singular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>álom</th>
<th>terem</th>
<th>ököl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>my</td>
<td>az én</td>
<td>álmod</td>
<td>öklöd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your (sg.)</td>
<td>a te</td>
<td>álma</td>
<td>ökle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his/her</td>
<td>az ő</td>
<td>álmunk</td>
<td>öklünk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our</td>
<td>a mi</td>
<td>álmod</td>
<td>öklötök</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your (pl.)</td>
<td>a ti</td>
<td>álmuk</td>
<td>öklük</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Regular possessive singular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>nadrág</th>
<th>szék</th>
<th>ismerős</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>my</td>
<td>az én</td>
<td>nadrágom</td>
<td>székem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your (sg.)</td>
<td>a te</td>
<td>nadrágod</td>
<td>széked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his/her</td>
<td>az ő</td>
<td>nadrága</td>
<td>széke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our</td>
<td>a mi</td>
<td>nadrágunk</td>
<td>székünk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your (pl.)</td>
<td>a ti</td>
<td>nadrágotok</td>
<td>széketeık</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their</td>
<td>az ő</td>
<td>nadrágjuk</td>
<td>székük</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.2 Plural possessive endings

The plural possessive paradigm marks the plurality of the possessed item, e.g., my dogs, his sisters.

In the possessive paradigm the plural suffix is -i (never -k), followed by the personal endings. The personal endings are slightly different in the plural paradigm, but unlike the singular paradigm, they are unchanging:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>my</th>
<th>-i-m</th>
<th>our</th>
<th>-i-nk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>your (sg.)</td>
<td>-i-d</td>
<td>your (pl.)</td>
<td>-i-tok/-i-tek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his/her</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>their</td>
<td>-i-k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.2.1 Vowel-final words

The plural -i attaches directly to words ending in a vowel. If the vowel is a or e, it is lengthened to ă or ę.

Vowel-final stems – possessive plural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>óra</th>
<th>csésze</th>
<th>szeplő</th>
<th>kapu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clock</td>
<td>cup</td>
<td>freckle</td>
<td>gate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>my</th>
<th>az én</th>
<th>csészéim</th>
<th>szeplőim</th>
<th>kapuim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>your (sg.)</td>
<td>a te</td>
<td>óráid</td>
<td>szeplőid</td>
<td>kapuid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his/her</td>
<td>az ő</td>
<td>csészéi</td>
<td>szeplői</td>
<td>kapui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our</td>
<td>a mi</td>
<td>óráink</td>
<td>szeplőink</td>
<td>kapuink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your (pl.)</td>
<td>a ti</td>
<td>óráitok</td>
<td>szeplőitek</td>
<td>kapuitok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their</td>
<td>az ő</td>
<td>csészék</td>
<td>szeplőik</td>
<td>kapuik</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Note that (unlike English) if each possessor has only one of a particular item, then the singular possessive paradigm is used.

Az orvos megvizsgálta a torkukat.
The doctor examined their throats (they each have one throat).

4 There is no -tök option here because in the plural there is never a front rounded vowel immediately preceding the personal ending.
8.2.2 **Consonant-final words**

The plural -i can not attach directly to words ending in a consonant. Instead, it must be preceded by -(j)a/-(j)e (identical with the third person possessive singular). As a rule, if the third person possessive includes a j in the singular paradigm for consonant-final words, then the j-initial suffix is employed throughout the plural paradigm as well.

| Consonant-final stems – possessive plural |
|-----------------|---------|-------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| toll pen        | kert garden | bűn crime | köröm (finger/toe) | kalap hat nail |
| my              | az én tollaim | kertjeim bűneim | körmeim kalapjaim |
| your (sg.)      | a ti tollaid | kertjeid bűneid | körmeid kalapjaid |
| his/her         | az ő tollai | kertjei bűnei | körmei kalapjai |
| our             | a mi tollaink | kertjeink bűneink | körmeink kalapjaink |
| your (pl.)      | a ti tollaitok | kertjeitek bűneitek | körmeitek kalapjaitok |
| their           | az ő tollaik | kertjeik bűneik | körmeik kalapjaik |

8.3 **ő~a and Ő~e stems**

Several nouns display an alternation in their final vowel in the third person forms of possession: in back-vowel stems the word-final ó becomes a before the third person possessive suffixes. Similarly, in front-vowel stems, word-final Ő becomes e before the suffix. Because the plural possessive is based on the singular possessive third person forms, this alternation may be continued there as well.

---

5 There are, however, numerous exceptions, e.g., barátjuk ‘their friend’ ~ baráttaik ‘their friends’.
Possession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>idő</th>
<th>ajtó</th>
<th>szülő</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>door</td>
<td>doors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

my       időm  ajtóm  ajtáim ~ ajtóim  szülőm  szüleim
your (sg.) a te  időd  ajtód ~ ajtóid  szülőd  szüleid
his/her  az  ideje  ajtaja ~ ajtai ~ ajtóí  szülejé~  szülei
our     a mi  időnk  ajtónk  ajtáink ~ ajtóink  szülőnk  szüleink
your (pl.) a ti  időtök  ajtótok  ajtáitok ~ ajtóitok  szülőtök  szüleitek
their   az  idejük  ajtajuk ~ ajtaik ~ ajtóik  szülejük~  szüleik
          ajtójuk  szülőjük

There is much free variation among these forms. Other nouns which exhibit this alternation are:

- csikó foal
- disznó pig
- hintó carriage
- hordó vat
- koporsó coffin
- orsó spindle
- tinó steer
- zászló flag

nouns formed with the suffix -ső

- belső interior
- első (the) first
- felső upper (part)
- külső exterior

8.4 Kinship terms

The following terms are irregular in forming the possessive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>apa 6 father</th>
<th>anya mother</th>
<th>bátya older brother</th>
<th>öcs younger brother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sg.</td>
<td>pl.</td>
<td>sg.</td>
<td>pl.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

my       az én  apám  anyám  bátyám  bátyáim  öcsém  öcséim
your (sg.) a te  apád  anyád  bátyád  bátyáid  öcséid  öcséid

6 An older form for ‘father’, atya, used mostly in religious terminology, declines exactly as apa.
### Nominal possession

In addition to pronouns indicating possession (my book, our garden, etc.) other nouns may possess items (John’s book, the story of his life, etc.).

#### 8.5.1 Marking the possessor

In Hungarian the nominal possessive relationship has two variants: (1) the possessor is unmarked (i.e., in the nominative case) and (2) the possessor is marked with the dative case. In both instances, the possessed item is marked with a third person possessive ending.

- **Kornél kalapja ~ Kornélnak a kalapja**  
  Kornél’s hat

- **egy anya gyerekei ~ egy anyának a gyerekei**  
  a mother’s children

---

7 When *fiú* means ‘boy’, the possessive declension is regular; it is only irregular with the meaning ‘son’.
Possession

8.5.1.1

When the possessor is in the nominative case, the possessed noun is not preceded by the definite article and the possessor must immediately precede the possessed noun or noun phrase.

Nem értettem a szöveg lényegét.
I did not understand the point of the text.

Gyula kutyája nem harap.
Gyula’s dog does not bite.

A lakosság húsz százaléka a fővárosban lakik.
Twenty percent of the population lives in the capital.

8.5.1.2

When the possessor is in the dative case the possessed noun is most often preceded by the definite article and the possessor may occur before or after the possessed noun (or may be entirely displaced).

Imrének fáj a lába. ~ Fáj a lába Imrének. ~ Imrének a lába fáj.
Imre’s foot hurts.

The definite article is not used if the possessed noun is otherwise determined.

A lakosságnak húsz százaléka a fővárosban lakik.
Twenty percent of the population lives in the capital.

8.5.1.3

The possessor must be in the dative case if

(a) it is ez, az, ezek, or azok:

Annak a címét elfelejtettem.
I forgot its title.

(b) it is modified by ez, az, ezek, or azok:

Ezeknek a szobáknak fehérek a falai.
The walls of these rooms are white.
Ennek az iskolának a homlokzata nagyon régi.
This school’s facade is very old.

(c) it is ki/kik or mi/mik.

Kinek a kutyája ez?
Whose dog is this?

Minek az ára ez?
What is this the price of?

8.5.2 Marking the possessed

The following table illustrates the possessive endings for singular and plural nominal possession. Note that, unlike the pronominal paradigm, the number (singular or plural) of the possessor is indicated on the possessor, the number of the possessed is indicated on the possessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular possessed</th>
<th>Plural possessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the boy’s book (one boy, one book)</td>
<td>the boy’s books (one boy, several books)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a fiú könyve ~</td>
<td>a fiú könyvei ~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a fiúnak a könyve</td>
<td>a fiúnak a könyvei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the boys’ book (several boys, one book)</td>
<td>the boys’ books (several boys, several books)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a fiúk könyve ~ a</td>
<td>a fiúk könyvei ~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a fiúknak a könyve</td>
<td>a fiúknak a könyvei</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note the difference in the way anya is marked in the following. In both sentences anya ‘mother’ is possessed by a plurality of individuals; in the first sentence, however, it is possessed by a pronoun, in the second, by a noun.

Pronominal possession:
Ismerem az (ő) anyjukat.
I know their mother.

Nominal possession:
Ismerem a fiúk anyját.
I know the boys’ mother.
Possession and formal forms of address

The terms maga, maguk, ön, and önök form their possessives as nominal possession.

Meleg a maga kabátja ~ magának a kabátja?
Is your coat warm?

Ezek az önök fényképei ~ önöknek a fényképei?
Are these your pictures?

Possessive declension

Accusative

Third person singular possessive forms end in a vowel and therefore do not require a linking vowel; a and e are lengthened to á and é before the accusative.

Keressük a kocsiját/szemüvegét/leveleit.
We are looking for his car/glasses/letters.

The linking vowel for the accusative case is a or e after all other possessive endings.

Elkérték a jegyünket. They asked for our tickets.

Elveszik a kabátotokat. They'll take your coats.

The accusative is optional after nouns possessed by the first or second persons singular; after all other possessive endings it may not be omitted.8

Ismerem a bátyád ~ bátyádat.
I know your brother.

Meglátogattuk az egyik ismerősöm ~ ismerősömet.
We visited a friend of mine.

Otthon hagytam a könyveim ~ könyveimet.
I left my books at home.

8 Compare with the accusative case of the personal and reflexive pronouns.
### 8.7.2 Other cases

All other cases suffix regularly. For complete paradigms, see appendix 2.

- **Beszálltunk a kocsijába.** We got into his car.
- **Olvastam a sikereidről.** I’ve read about your successes.
- **Állandóan gondol a barátaira.** She is always thinking about her friends.
- **Sokat fizetett a házáért.** She paid a lot for her house.

### 8.8 Non-attributive possession: é, éi

The suffix é, plural éi, is attached to nouns to denote ‘belonging to’. It is added directly to nouns; it lengthens final vowels a, e to á, é; otherwise no other stem changes occur. It can attach to singular, plural, or possessed nouns and may be followed by a case. The interrogative form is kié in the singular; the plural kiéi is seldom used.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>friend</th>
<th>non-attributive possessive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>barát</td>
<td>baráté</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sg1poss barátom</td>
<td>barátomé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sg2poss barátod</td>
<td>barátodé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sg3poss barátja</td>
<td>barátjáé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl1poss barátunk</td>
<td>barátunké</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl2poss barátotok</td>
<td>barátotoké</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl3poss barátjuk</td>
<td>barátjuké</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>friends</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>barátok</td>
<td>barátoké</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sg1poss barátaim</td>
<td>barátaimé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sg2poss barátaid</td>
<td>barátaidé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sg3poss barátai</td>
<td>barátaié</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl1poss barátaink</td>
<td>barátainké</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl2poss barátaitok</td>
<td>barátaitoké</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl3poss barátai</td>
<td>barátaiék</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 In the plural, a question form with a nominal possession construction is preferred: **Kinek a táskái azok?** ‘Whose bags are those?’ replaces **Kiéi azok a táskák?** ‘Whose are those bags?’.
Ez a lakás Zsuzsáé. Zsuzsa lakását már béreltem, de Imréét sohasem.
This apartment is Zsuzsa’s. I have rented Zsuzsa’s apartment, but never Imre’s.

Ezek a kulcsok a barátodéi. Ezek a kulcsok az övéi, de nem találom az apáméit.
These keys are your friend’s. These keys are hers, but I can’t find my father’s.
Chapter 9

Postpositions

Postpositions supplement the case system and provide additional ways of expressing temporal, spatial, or other abstraction relationships. As the name implies, postpositions follow a noun phrase instead of preceding it. The noun phrase is usually in the nominative case, though some postpositions require a noun phrase marked with a different case.

Postpositions share several characteristics with cases. In addition to the abstract postpositions there is a locative system; postpositions may be used as roots to which personal suffixes are attached; demonstrative pronouns exhibit a pattern of agreement as similarly found with cases; verbs may govern postpositional phrases; and like phrases marked with the oblique cases, postpositional phrases function as adverbials, thus they also share word order patterns.

9.1 Some postpositions of time

közben  during
múlva  in, after (+ time expression)
ótta  since
tájt  around, about

Három nap múlva jövök haza.
I’ll come home in three days.

Az előadás közben senki sem beszélt.
No one spoke during the lecture.
9.2 Postpositions with possessive suffixes

Possessive suffixes attach to postpositions ending in consonants as they would to low-vowel noun stems. Added emphasis may be supplied by prefixing the personal pronoun to the postposition. As with the possessive declension of nouns, the third person plural possessive pronoun in this case is ö (not Ők).

9.2.1 Some postpositions taking possessive suffixes

által  by (means of)     miatt  because of
ellen  against         nélkül  without
helyett instead of    szerint  according to
iránt  towards, for    után  after
kívül  besides, except

9.2.2 Sample possessive paradigms of postpositions¹

(emphatic)

szerintem  énszerintem  according to me
szerinted  teszerinted  "   you (sg.)
szerinte  őszerinte  "   him/her
szerintünk  miszerintünk  "   us
szerintetek  tiszerintetek  "   you (pl.)
szerintük  őszerintük  "   them

¹ Recall that for most purposes the formal forms of address behave like nouns; thus the postposition paradigms for maga, maguk, Őn, Őnök are like those for nouns: Maga nélkül ‘without you’, Őnök után ‘after you’, etc.
Postpositions of location

The following are postpositions that adhere to the same tri-part directional system as found with the locative cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motion toward</th>
<th>No motion</th>
<th>Motion away</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>⇢ ●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>● ⇢</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- élé in front of
- mögét behind
- fölé/fölött/felett above
- alá below
- mellé mellett next to
- közé között between
- köré körül around
- felé in the direction of
Négy szék van az asztal körül.
There are four chairs around the table.

Felakasztotta a festményt a két ablak közé.
She hung the painting up between the two windows.

A szőnyeg alá seperte a port.
He swept the dust under the rug.

9.3.1

These postpositions may also add possessive suffixes. Note that with post-positions ending in a vowel (él, mögé, fölé, alá, közé, köré, and felé), the third person singular forms may occur with or without the -ja/-je suffix.

elém, eléd, élé(je), élénk, élétek, éléjük
toward in front of me, you (sg.), him/her/it . . .

élőtem, élőtted, élőtte, élőttünk, élőttetek, élőttük
in front of me, you (sg.), him/her/it . . .

élőlem, élőled, élőle, előlünk, előletek, előlük
from in front of me, you (sg.), him/her/it . . .

alám, alád, alá(ja), alánk, alátok, alájuk
toward beneath me, you (sg.), him/her/it . . .

alattam, alattad, alatta, alattunk, alattatok, alattuk
beneath me, you (sg.), him/her/it . . .

alólam, alólad, alóla, alólunk, alólatok, alóluk
from beneath me, you (sg.), him/her/it . . .

Gyere ide mellém!
Come here next to me!

Ki áll mögötted?
Who is standing behind you?

Elénk tárult a balatoni táj.
The Balaton landscape unfolded before us.
9.4 Postpositions governing cases

The following postpositions govern cases other than the nominative.

**superessive** (-o/-e/-ö)-n +

- **alul** at the bottom
- **át** across, through
- **belül** within
- **felül/fölül** at the top
- **innen** this side of
- **keresztül** through
- **kívül**\(^2\) besides, outside of, except for
- **túl** beyond

_Egy órán belül elkészül._
It will be ready within an hour.

_Tiszán innen, Dunán túl . . ._
This side of the Tisza, beyond the Danube . . . (folk song)

**delative** -ról/-röl +

- **nézve** as seen from

_Közelebbről nézve láttuk, hogy az aláírás hamis volt._
Upon closer inspection we saw that the signature was fake.

---

\(^2\) _kívül_ has two paradigms with personal endings:

_kívülem, kívüled, kívüle, kívülünk, kívületek, kívülük_ as well as

_rajtam kívül, rajtad kívül, rajta kívül, rajtunk kívül, rajtatak kívül, rajtuk kívül._
Postpositions

9.5 Complex postpositions

9.5.1

Some postpositions are formed of a root, a possessive suffix, and a case.\(^3\) The third person singular forms can be used nominally as well as pronominally, thus the preceding noun phrase may be in either the nominative or dative case.

(az én) számomra for my part

(a te) számodra for your (sg.) part

(az ű), valaki, mindenkí, etc. számára for his/her, someone’s, everyone’s part

\(^3\) Structurally these are simply nominal possessive constructions; they are included here as postpositions by convention only.
The following postpositions pattern identically:

ellenemre, ellenedre, ellenére, etc.
in spite of me, you, him/her/it . . .

dhistemért, kedvedért, kedvéért, etc.
for my, your, his/her sake . . .

részemre, részedre, részére, etc.
for my, your, his/her part . . .

javamra, javadra, javára, etc.
in my, your, his/her favor . . .

The following postpositions occur with the third person possessive suffix only, i.e., they are not used with pronouns:

folyamán in the course of
jóvoltából thanks to, due to
következtében as a consequence of
mentén along
révén through, by means of
során in the course of
útján through, by means of
A patak mentén találtam egy aranygyűrűt.
I found a gold ring along by the stream.

A hosszú tárgyalás folyamán mindenki el tudta mondani a véleményét.
Everyone was able to voice his opinion in the course of the long discussion.

### 9.6 Demonstratives and postpositions

In the same way that demonstratives agree in case and number with the noun they modify, so do they agree in postposition. Compare the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demonstrative</th>
<th>Postposition</th>
<th>Postposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ezek előtt a házak előtt</td>
<td>ezekben a házakban</td>
<td>in front of these houses in these houses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, the final -z of the demonstratives is not tolerated before postpositions (and cases) beginning with a consonant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demonstrative</th>
<th>Postposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e mögött a ház mögött</td>
<td>ebben a házban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behind this house</td>
<td>in this house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is found with cases, postpositional phrases with ez, ezek may be reduced:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demonstrative</th>
<th>Postposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ez alatt a szék alatt</td>
<td>e szék alatt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under this chair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ezek között a szekrények között</td>
<td>e szekrények között</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between these cupboards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
át  through, across  szemben  facing, opposite
együtt  together  túl  beyond
keresztül  through

Túl a Tiszán van egy csikós . . .
There is a cowboy beyond the Tisza river . . . (folksong)
Adjectives qualify nouns and pronouns. When used attributively, adjectives in Hungarian precede the noun they modify and do not agree in case or number with the noun.

Hosszú szoknyákat viselnek. They are wearing long skirts.
Érdekes cikkről beszélnek. They are talking about an interesting article.

### 10.1 Declension of adjectives

Adjectives, when not used as modifiers, decline for case and number.

Predicate adjectives must agree in number with their subjects:

A fiú magas. The boy is tall.
A fiúk magasak. The boys are tall.

Adjectives may occur in all cases (though never when used attributively).

Kérem a pirosat. I would like the red one.
A barnáról beszél. He is speaking about the brunette.
Megitta a feketét. She drank the coffee (lit., the black one).
Fáradtnak látszol. You seem tired.

#### 10.1.1 Nominative plural of adjectives

The plural suffix -k is added to adjectives in a slightly different manner than nouns. When required, the linking vowel choice is a/e (exceptions are listed below).
10.1.1.1 Adjectives ending in a vowel

Word-final a or e is lengthened to á, é, respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brown</td>
<td>barna</td>
<td>barnák</td>
<td>black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dear</td>
<td>drága</td>
<td>drágák</td>
<td>gray</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.1.1.2 Adjectives ending in -i/-ú/-ű

These adjectives require the linking vowel a/e.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>kanadai</td>
<td>kanadaik</td>
<td>one from pesti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pest pestiek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long</td>
<td>hosszú</td>
<td>hosszúak</td>
<td>simple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.1.1.3 Some exceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>small</td>
<td>kicsi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kicsik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vain</td>
<td>hiú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hiůk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thick</td>
<td>sűrű</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sűrűk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.1.1.4 Adjectives ending in ó or Ő witness some variation in forming the plural.
Participles, for example, allow both variants – with or without the linking vowel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>visible</td>
<td>látható</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>láthatóak ~ láthatók</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intelligible</td>
<td>érthető</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>érthetőek ~ érthetők</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>permanent</td>
<td>állandó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>állandóak ~ állandók</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 10.1.1.5 Other adjectives ending in -ó/-ő never take a linking vowel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>jó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiny</td>
<td>apró</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheap</td>
<td>olcsó</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10.1.2 Adjectives ending in a consonant

### 10.1.2.1 Adjectives require the linking vowel a/e before the plural -k.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pretty</td>
<td>csinos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worthwhile</td>
<td>érdemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strong</td>
<td>erős</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interesting</td>
<td>érdekes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patient</td>
<td>türelmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hardworking</td>
<td>szorgalmas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10.1.2.2 Exceptionally, the following adjectives require the linking vowel o before the plural -k.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>big</td>
<td>nagy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rich</td>
<td>gazdag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thick</td>
<td>vastag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free</td>
<td>szabad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>happy</td>
<td>boldog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blind</td>
<td>vak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>base</td>
<td>aljas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>más</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adjectives formed with the derivation -atlan/-etlen or its variants decline as nouns; therefore they use o/e\(^1\) for the linking vowel in the plural.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>unhealthy</td>
<td>egészségte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unhappy</td>
<td>boldogta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impatient</td>
<td>türelmetlen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invisible</td>
<td>láthatatlan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethnonyms are the words used to indicate someone’s ethnicity, home country or city. In Hungarian these words are not capitalized. Ethnonyms that do not end in -i decline as nouns and require the o/e/ö linking vowel choice. Ethnonyms ending in -i decline as adjectives and require the linking vowel a/e.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>magyar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaniard/Spanish</td>
<td>spanyol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>görög</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>cseh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pole/Polish</td>
<td>lengyel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turk/Turkish</td>
<td>török</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one from Budapest</td>
<td>pesti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one from Vienna</td>
<td>bécsi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>amerikai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Londoner</td>
<td>londoni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{1}\) The ö linking vowel option found with nouns is never used since these adjectives never have a last vowel that is front and rounded.
The accusative of adjectives

The accusative is suffixed to adjectives slightly differently than to nouns.

Adjectives ending in vowels

Adjectives ending in vowels suffix the accusative case -t in the same way as nouns ending in vowels.

Adjectives end in a or e lengthen to á, é, respectively, when adding the accusative -t.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominative</th>
<th>Accusative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>sárga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ugly</td>
<td>csúnya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weak</td>
<td>gyenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blond</td>
<td>szőke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjectives ending in any other vowel add the accusative -t directly to the end of the word.²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominative</th>
<th>Accusative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>awful</td>
<td>borzasztó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>edible</td>
<td>ehető</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dense</td>
<td>sűrű</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sad</td>
<td>szomorú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>old</td>
<td>régi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curious</td>
<td>kíváncsi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Note how this differs from the formation of plural adjectives: in the plural, a linking vowel is needed before adjectives ending in -i/-ú/-ű.
Adjectives ending in consonants

Regular adjectives ending in a consonant require the linking vowel a/e before the accusative -t.³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominative</th>
<th>Accusative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>blue</td>
<td>kék</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valuable</td>
<td>értékes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ready</td>
<td>kész</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tall</td>
<td>magas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>alacsony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sure</td>
<td>biztos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following adjectives are exceptions and require the linking vowel o before the accusative -t.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominative</th>
<th>Accusative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>big</td>
<td>nagy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happy</td>
<td>boldog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rich</td>
<td>gazdag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blind</td>
<td>vak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thick</td>
<td>vastag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free</td>
<td>szabad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjectives formed with the derivation -atlan/-etlen or its variants decline as nouns; since they end in -n they take no linking vowel before the accusative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominative</th>
<th>Accusative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>unnecessary</td>
<td>szügségtelen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>ismeretlen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ Note how this differs from the formation of the accusative in the noun: in the noun no linking vowel is required if the word ends in j, l, ly, n, ny, r, s, sz, z, zs.
Ethnonyms ending in a consonant decline as nouns: there is no linking vowel after the consonants j, l, ly, n, ny, r, s, sz, z, zs; otherwise, the linking vowel is o/e/ö before the accusative -t. (See section 6.1.2.1 on the accusative of nouns.)

Other irregularities in the accusative and plural of adjectives

The following adjectives witness a change in the stem when forming the plural and accusative:
nominative  |  accusative
---|---
sg. | plural

difficult | nehéz  | nehezek  | nehezet
honest | derék  | derekak  | derekat
few | kevés  | kevesek  | keveset
brave | bátor  | bátrak  | bátrat

**10.1.3.2 kicsi—kis**

The adjective kicsi ‘small’ has a short form kis. The short form is used when it is used attributively; otherwise the long form kicsi is used. (Similarly kétő – két ‘two’, see section 14.1.2.)

**Kis lakásban lakom.** I live in a small apartment. (attribute)

**Egy kis kávét kérek.** I would like a little coffee. (attribute)

**A lakásom kicsi.** My apartment is small. (predicate adjective)

**Csak egy kicsit tudok franciául.** I only know a bit of French. (accusative)

**10.2 Adjectives used as nouns**

Adjectives may function as nouns; when they do, they decline as nouns.

**Azok az épületek ismerősek.**
Those buildings are familiar.

**Azok ismerősök.**
They are acquaintances.

**10.2.1 Full declension of adjectives**

Other than in the accusative, adjectives suffix cases exactly as nouns.
Forming the comparative

The comparative expresses the degree of an adjective, e.g., old: older. To form the comparative the suffix -bb is added to the adjective.

If the adjective ends in the vowels a or e, the vowel is lengthened when adding -bb; adjectives ending in other vowels witness no change in the stem.
drága  dear, expensive  drágább  dearer, more expensive
érdhető  understandable  érthetőbb  more understandable
fekete  black  feketébb  blacker
keserű  bitter  keserűbb  more bitter
olcsó  cheap  olcsóbb  cheaper
régi  old  régibb  older
szomorú  sad  szomorúbb  sadder

10.3.2
The following adjectives lose their final vowel -ú/-ő (compare these with their adverbial forms):

hosszú  long  hosszabb  longer
ifjú  young  ifjabb  younger
könnyű  easy  könnyebb  easier
lassú  slow  lassabb  slower
szörnyű  awful  szörnyebb  more awful

10.3.3
The linking vowel a/e is used to link the suffix to adjectives ending in a consonant.

édes  sweet  édesebb  sweeter
különös  special  különösebb  more special
piros  red  pirosabb  redder
The following are some common exceptions:

- **jó** good, **jobb** better
- **kicsi** small, **kisebb** smaller
- **sok** many, a lot, **több** more
- **szép** beautiful, **szebb** more beautiful

Of the exceptional adjectives forming their plural and accusative with the linking vowel o, only **nagy** ‘big’, **nagyobb** ‘bigger’ is exceptional in the comparative.

Adjectives with a v-stem⁴

- **bő** abundant, **bővebb** more abundant
- **hű** faithful, **hűbb ~ hívebb** more faithful

Note the stem changes in the following:

- **bátor** brave, **bátrabb** braver
- **derék** decent, **derekabb** more decent
- **kevés** few, little, **kevesebb** fewer, less
- **nehéz** difficult, heavy, **nehezebb** more difficult, heavier

Some stems are already a comparative degree:

- **alsó** lower, **felső** upper
- **belső** inner, **külső** outer

---

⁴ Compare with the adverbial forms where the v-stem is also evident.
Adjectives with the comparative suffix decline as regular adjectives.

### 10.4 Using the comparative

#### 10.4.1

Comparative statements are commonly made with the conjunction mint ‘than’.

- **Pál érdekesebb történeteket mesél, mint Attila.**
  Pál tells more interesting stories than Attila.

- **Az apám jobban főz, mint én.**
  My father cooks better than I.

#### 10.4.2

If the noun in the mint clause is in the nominative case, it can instead be inflected with -nál/-nél; the conjunction mint is subsequently omitted.

- **Pál érdekesebb történeteket mesél Attilánál.**
  Pál tells more interesting stories than Attila.

- **Az apám jobban főz nálam.**
  My father cooks better than I.

#### 10.4.3

If the compared item or action is something other than a pronoun or noun in the nominative, comparison can only be made with the mint construction.

- **Rózsa szebben ír, mint rajzol.**
  Rózsa writes more beautifully than she draws.

- **István kevesebb húst eszik, mint zöldséget.**
  István eats less meat than vegetables.
10.4.4 egyre

Used before the comparative degree, this means ‘more and more’/‘less and less’.

**Péter egyre magasabb lesz.** Péter is getting taller and taller.

**Zsuzsa egyre jobban síel.** Zsuzsa is skiing better and better.

**Egyre kevesebb beszél az órán.** He speaks less and less in class.

10.4.5 minél . . ., annál . . .

Used before the comparative degree, these words join two clauses of comparison:

**Minél szorgalmasabban tanul István, annál jobban szereti a matematikát.**
The more diligently István studies, the more he likes mathematics.

**Minél többet eszem, annál éhesebb leszek.**
The more I eat, the hungrier I get.

10.4.6 Degree of comparative

The degree of a comparison, e.g., *three meters higher*, uses the -val/-vel case on the degree preceding the comparative form:

- **három méterrel magasabb** three meters higher
- **sokkal boldogabb** much happier
- **mennyivel könnyebben?** how much more easily?
- **két órával hosszabb** two hours longer

10.5 Superlative

The superlative (old: oldest) is formed by attaching the prefix leg- to the comparative. No changes are otherwise effected in the stem.
Demonstrative adjectives

These are also used pronominally, see 7.6.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominative</th>
<th>Nominative</th>
<th>Accusative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>Singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>such, like that</td>
<td>olyan</td>
<td>olyanok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>such, like this</td>
<td>ilyen</td>
<td>ilyenek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what kind of</td>
<td>milyen</td>
<td>milyenek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interrogative adjectives

These are also used pronominally, see 7.7.3.

**10.7.1 milyen (‘what kind of’, ‘what is (something) like’)**

When used as a predicate adjective, milyen translates as ‘what is (something) like’.

Milyenek azok a férfiak?  What are those men like?

Milyen az a könyv?  What is that book like?

Otherwise, attributively, milyen translates as ‘what kind of’.

Milyen gyümölcsöt akarsz vásárolni?  What kind of fruit do you want to buy?

---

5 See section 7.6.3.1 for more on the use of these adjectival demonstratives.
For emphasis, *milyen* may be used to modify adjectives.

- **Milyen jó zongorista a Tamás!** What a good pianist Tamás is!
- **Milyen szép ez a virág!** What a beautiful flower this is!

When modifying adverbs, *milyen* translates into English as ‘how’ – both interrogatively and emphatically.

- **Milyen gyorsan fut?** How fast does she run?
- **Milyen gyorsan fut!** How fast she runs!

### 10.8 Relative adjectives

(These are also used pronominally, see 7.8.) Subordinate clauses with relative adjectives may begin with the conjunction *mint* ‘as’; they may omit *mint*; or the clause may begin with *mint* and omit the relative adjective.

*amilyen* as, such as

- **Olyan fekete a szeme, mint amilyen a korom.**
- **Olyan fekete a szeme, amilyen a korom.**
- **Olyan fekete a szeme, mint a korom.**

Her eyes are as black as soot.

### 10.9 Indefinite adjectives

#### 10.9.1 ‘Some’

When modifying mass nouns, the word ‘some’ is implied in Hungarian; the phrase *egy kis* ‘a little’, ‘some’ may also be used.

- **Kávét és vajat szeretnél venni. ~ Egy kis kávét és vajat szeretnél venni.**
  
I would like to buy (some) coffee and butter.
**Kérsz teát?**  
Would you like some tea?

When modifying count nouns, use néhány ‘several’, ‘a few’, ‘some’ or egy pár ‘a couple’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Néhány körtét evett.</th>
<th>She ate several pears.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tegnap este írtam egy pár levelet.</td>
<td>I wrote a couple of letters last night.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10.9.2 ‘Any’

Hungarian does not have the equivalent of English ‘any’ (found in negative sentences). It is already implied in the negative sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sohasem olvas újságot.</th>
<th>He never reads (any) newspapers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ezen a nyáron nem veszek új ruhát.</td>
<td>I am not buying (any) new clothes this summer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For emphasis, the constructions egy ... sem ‘not one’ or egyetlen ... sem ‘not a single ...’ may be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Egy szót sem szólt.</th>
<th>He didn’t say one word.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ebben az évben egyetlen jó filmet sem láttunk.</td>
<td>We haven’t seen one good film this year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyetlen rossz tanítványom sincs.</td>
<td>I don’t have a single bad student.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10.10 Numerical adjectives

Numbers may be used as adjectives by suffixing -s. (See section 12.2.2 for forming and using -s.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Az ötvenes években született.</th>
<th>She was born in the fifties (lit., the fifty-ish years).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Az egyes villamos ma nem jár.</td>
<td>The number 1 tram is not running today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 408-as irodában dolgozik.</td>
<td>He works in Room 408.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 11

Adverbs

Adverbs are the part of speech addressing manner, place and time of an action.

11.1 Adverbs of manner: Hogy(an)? . . . How?

11.1.1 -an/-en

Most adverbs of manner are made by adding the suffix -(a)n/-e)n to the corresponding adjective. No linking vowel is required when suffixing to adjectives ending in -a/-e; this vowel, however, is lengthened to á/é:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>csúnya</td>
<td>ugly</td>
<td>csúnyán</td>
<td>not nicely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drága</td>
<td>dear, expensive</td>
<td>drágán</td>
<td>dearly, expensively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fekete</td>
<td>black</td>
<td>feketén</td>
<td>pessimistically, on the black market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furcsa</td>
<td>strange</td>
<td>furcsán</td>
<td>strangely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ritka</td>
<td>rare</td>
<td>ritkán</td>
<td>rarely, seldom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The linking vowel a/e is usually used when combining with adjectives ending in -í/-ú/-ú:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>célszerű</td>
<td>expedient</td>
<td>célszerűen</td>
<td>expediently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keserű</td>
<td>bitter</td>
<td>keserűen</td>
<td>bitterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kíváncsi</td>
<td>curious</td>
<td>kíváncsian</td>
<td>curiously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>savanyú</td>
<td>sour</td>
<td>savanyúan</td>
<td>sourly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>szomorú</td>
<td>sad</td>
<td>szomorúan</td>
<td>sadly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is some variation in the use of linking vowels when combining with adjectives (these are mostly participles) ending in -ő/-ő. With some exceptions, however, the linking vowel is preferred:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Linking Vowel</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Linking Vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>érthető</td>
<td>understandable</td>
<td>érthetően</td>
<td>understandably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forró</td>
<td>hot, boiling</td>
<td>forróñ</td>
<td>hotly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kiváló</td>
<td>outstanding</td>
<td>kiválóan</td>
<td>outstandingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>látható</td>
<td>visible</td>
<td>láthathóan</td>
<td>visibly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>olcsó</td>
<td>inexpensive</td>
<td>olcsón</td>
<td>inexpensively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The linking vowel a/e is always required when suffixing to adjectives ending in a consonant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Linking Vowel</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Linking Vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aranyos</td>
<td>sweet, cute</td>
<td>aranyosan</td>
<td>sweetly, charmingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biztos</td>
<td>sure</td>
<td>biztosan</td>
<td>surely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boldog</td>
<td>happy</td>
<td>boldogan</td>
<td>happily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kedves</td>
<td>nice</td>
<td>kedvesen</td>
<td>nicely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>szép</td>
<td>beautiful</td>
<td>szépen</td>
<td>beautifully</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exceptions:

The following adjectives cannot combine with -an/-en:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Linking Vowel</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Linking Vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>derek</td>
<td>honest, good</td>
<td>derekül</td>
<td>honestly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jó</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>jól</td>
<td>well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remek</td>
<td>splendid</td>
<td>remekül</td>
<td>splendidly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rossz</td>
<td>bad, poor</td>
<td>rosszul</td>
<td>badly, poorly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vad</td>
<td>wild</td>
<td>vadul</td>
<td>wildly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following adjectives form their adverbs with -on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Linking Vowel</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Linking Vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gazdag</td>
<td>rich</td>
<td>gazdagon</td>
<td>richly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nagy</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>nagyon</td>
<td>very, greatly, strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>szabad</td>
<td>free</td>
<td>szabadon</td>
<td>freely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vastag</td>
<td>thick</td>
<td>vastagon</td>
<td>thickly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following adjectives lose their final vowel when forming the adverb:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hosszú</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>hosszan</td>
<td>at length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ifjú</td>
<td>young</td>
<td>ifjan</td>
<td>young, at an early age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>könnyű</td>
<td>easy, light</td>
<td>könnyen</td>
<td>easily, lightly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lassú</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>lassan</td>
<td>slowly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>szörnyű</td>
<td>awful</td>
<td>szörnyen</td>
<td>awfully</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other stem changes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bátor</td>
<td>brave</td>
<td>bátran</td>
<td>bravely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bő</td>
<td>abundant</td>
<td>bőven</td>
<td>abundantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hű</td>
<td>faithful</td>
<td>hiven</td>
<td>faithfully (or hűen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nehéz</td>
<td>heavy, difficult</td>
<td>nehezen</td>
<td>heavily, with difficulty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.1.2 -lag/-leg

The suffix -lag/-leg also forms adverbs from adjectives (and participles). Although it is difficult to predict when adverbs are formed with -lag/-leg as opposed to -an/-en, the former is most often used with adjectives formed with -i, and the two variants are rarely used with the same adjective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eredeti</td>
<td>original</td>
<td>eredetileg</td>
<td>originally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gyakorlati</td>
<td>practical</td>
<td>gyakorlatilag</td>
<td>in practice, practically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lehető</td>
<td>possible</td>
<td>lehetőleg</td>
<td>possibly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>politikai</td>
<td>political</td>
<td>politikailag</td>
<td>politically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valószínű</td>
<td>probable</td>
<td>valószínűleg</td>
<td>probably</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ezt a konferenciát eredetileg csak évente egyszer tartották.

Originally this conference was held only once a year.
Mária politikailag jól ismeri Kínát, de nyelvismerete gyenge.
Mária knows China well politically, but her knowledge of the language is poor.

This suffix is sometimes attached to nouns as well:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Adjunct Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>arány</td>
<td>proportion</td>
<td>aránylag</td>
<td>proportionately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eset</td>
<td>case, instance</td>
<td>esetleg</td>
<td>perhaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tény</td>
<td>fact</td>
<td>tényleg</td>
<td>really</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viszony</td>
<td>relation</td>
<td>viszonylag</td>
<td>relatively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 11.1.3 The essive -ul/-ül

This ending lengthens word-final a and e to á and é, respectively; otherwise there are no changes in the stem when suffixing.

The essive case -ul/-ül is used to form adverbs from adjectives ending in (a)tlan/-(e)tlen:

- **Váratlanul toppant be a sógorom.**
  My brother-in-law showed up unexpectedly.

- **Egészségtelenül táplálkozol.**
  You eat unhealthy foods (lit., ‘not healthily’).

- **Ismeretlenül is üdvözlöm a férjedet.**
  My regards to your husband though we haven’t even met yet.

The essive case is required when expressing an action ‘in a language’: magyarul ‘in Hungarian’, görögül ‘in Greek’. Note in the following examples that the English expressions may translate as direct objects, not adverbs:

- **Tudok magyarul, angolul és franciául.**
  I know Hungarian, English and French.

- **Zsuzsa már jól beszél oroszul, és most németül is tanul.**
  Zsuzsa speaks Russian well and is studying German now, too.

This case may also be added to nouns to denote how the noun is used.

- **István feleségül vette a húgomat.**
  István married my younger sister (lit., took her as a wife).
Ez a régi épület iskolául szolgál.
This old building serves as a school.

Segítségül kellett hívnom a szomszédomat.
I had to call my neighbor for (lit., as) help.

11.1.4 The essive-formal case -ként

Similar to the essive, -ként is used with nouns to denote how the noun is used. This is usually translated as ‘as’ in English.

Mérnök, de egyelőre tanárként dolgozik.
She is an engineer, but for the time being she is working as a teacher.

Egy emberként beszéltek a tárgyalások alatt.
They spoke as one man during the negotiations.

Laci önként jelentkezett a rendőrségen.
Laci turned himself in voluntarily at the police station. (lit., ‘as himself’)

11.1.5 -képp(en)

The suffix -képp(en) has the same meaning as the essive-formal and is found in a few forms:

aképpen in that way
eképp(en) in this way
mindenképpen in any case
tulajdonképpen actually, really, properly

11.1.6 More adverbs of manner

alig hardly
általában in general, usually
annyira so much, to such an extent

igen indeed
ingyen free, gratis
is is so so
With some expressions, the accusative case is used adverbially:

**elég**

enough

**eleget**

Eleget hallottam már róla.

I have heard enough about him.

**jó**

good

**jót**

Jót aludtam.

I had a good sleep./I slept well.

**kevés**

few

**keveset**

Keveset sportolsz.

You play (very) few sports.
nagy big nagyot Nagyot nevettünk. We had a good laugh.
sok many sokat Sokat beszél a barátnőjéről. He talks a lot about his girlfriend.

Verbs of seeming, sounding like, looking like, feeling, may take an adverbial complement – not an adjective, as in English. The adverbial may be an adverb of manner or an adjective or noun marked in the dative case.

Jól nézel ki. You look good.
Jól esett ez a séta. That walk felt good.
Rosszul érzi magát. He feels bad, poorly, not well.
Ez nekem jól hangzik. That sounds good to me.
Jó ötletnek hangzik. It sounds like a good idea.
Fáradtnak látszol. You seem tired.
Eleinte könnyűnek tűnt. It seemed easy at first.

Adverbial participles

Adverbial participles are adverbs of manner made from verbs. See section 4.4.3 on how to form them.

Tréfálkozva mondta, hogy tíz gyereket akar. She said jokingly that she wants ten children.
Ásítva kávézott. He drank his coffee yawning.

Comparative and superlative of adverbs of manner

The comparative and superlative of adverbs of manner are formed by adding the adverbial suffix -an/-en to adjectives already formed for the
comparative and superlative (See sections 10.3 and 10.5 to form the comparative and superlative of adjectives.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>positive</th>
<th>comparative</th>
<th>comparative</th>
<th>superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beautiful</td>
<td>szép</td>
<td>szebb</td>
<td>szebben</td>
<td>legszebben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rare</td>
<td>ritka</td>
<td>ritkább</td>
<td>ritkábban</td>
<td>legritkábban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loud</td>
<td>hangos</td>
<td>hangosabb</td>
<td>hangosabban</td>
<td>leghangosabban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>jó</td>
<td>jobb</td>
<td>jobban</td>
<td>legjobban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>few</td>
<td>kevés</td>
<td>kevesebb</td>
<td>kevesebben</td>
<td>legkevesebben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>much, many</td>
<td>sok</td>
<td>több</td>
<td>többen</td>
<td>legtöbben</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kati sokkal szebben énekel nálam, de Csilla énekel a legszebben.
Kati sings much more beautifully than I, but Csilla sings the most beautifully.

Ebben az évben többen iratkoztak be a magyar tanfolyamra, mint tavaly.
This year more people signed up for the Hungarian course than last year.

Hol lehet legolcsóbban benzint venni?
Where can one buy gas most cheaply?

Csinosabban öltözködik most, mint régen.
She dresses more prettily now than before.

Note also the following irregular adverbial forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>positive</th>
<th>comparative</th>
<th>superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nagyon</td>
<td>very much</td>
<td>inkább</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>egy kicsit</td>
<td>a little</td>
<td>kevésbé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rosszul</td>
<td>badly</td>
<td>rosszabbul</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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I like Swiss chocolate very much, but I like Belgian chocolate most of all.

Márta knows a little German, less French and knows the least Italian.

### 11.2.1

Adjectives with the derivational suffix (a)tlan/-len (or its variants) and comparative or superlative affixes use the adverbial ending -ul/ül.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>(a)tálan</th>
<th>(a)tálnabb</th>
<th>(a)tálnabbül</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cruel</td>
<td>kegyetlen</td>
<td>kegyetlenebb</td>
<td>kegyetlenebbül</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unhappy</td>
<td>boldogtálan</td>
<td>boldogtálanabb</td>
<td>boldogtálanabbül</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The old man treats his neighbors even more cruelly now that he has become ill.

### 11.2.2 egyre

Use egyre with the comparative form of adverbs to mean more and more so or less and less so.

A szülei egyre gyakrabban utaznak külföldre.  
His parents travel abroad more and more frequently.

Egyre többen tanulnak angolul az iskolában.  
More and more people study English in school.

Imre egyre korábban kel fel.  
Imre gets up earlier and earlier.
Use this with the comparative of adverbs to compare clauses.

Minél jobban tudsz főzni, annál többen jönnek hozzá vacsorázni.
The better you know how to cook the more people come to your house for dinner.

Minél ritkábban írsz nekem, annál ritkábban gondolok rád.
The more seldom you write me, the more seldom I think about you.

The instrumental case -val/-vel is used to express the degree of comparison of the adverb.

Sokkal kedvesebben bánik velem, mint régen.
She treats me much more nicely than before.

Péter egy kicsivel jobban tud svédül, mint a húga.
Péter knows Swedish a little bit better than his sister.

Expressions of quantity can be used as adverbs when denoting the number of people in the subject. In these constructions the subject is translated into English as either a pronoun or ‘people’.

Százan álltak a sorban.
A hundred people stood in line.

Hányan mentek Szentendrére vasárnap?
How many of you are going to Szentendre on Sunday?

Kevesen voltunk az előadáson.
There were few of us at the lecture.
11.4 Adverbs of space

Most expressions of space are formed with the case system and are discussed in chapter 6.

11.4.1 Locative system

Consistent with the locative system in case-marking, adverbs of space have a tri-part distinction with respect to motion toward, no motion, and motion away. The following table illustrates the locative system for deixis and interrogatives of place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motion toward (comparative)</th>
<th>Motion toward</th>
<th>No motion</th>
<th>Motion away</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➩</td>
<td>➩</td>
<td>➩</td>
<td>➩</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>hova? (to) where?</th>
<th>hol? where?</th>
<th>honnan? from where?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>idébb</td>
<td>more toward here</td>
<td>ide (toward) here</td>
<td>itt here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>odább ~ odébb</td>
<td>more toward there</td>
<td>oda (toward) there</td>
<td>ott there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>errébb</td>
<td>further this way</td>
<td>erre in this direction, this way</td>
<td>erről from this direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arrább ~ arrébb</td>
<td>further that way</td>
<td>arra in that direction, that way</td>
<td>arról from that direction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hol van a táskam? Itt van az asztal alatt.
Where is my bag? Here it is under the table.

Merre vezet ez az ösvény? Menjünk arra!
Where does this path lead? Let’s go in that direction.
Honnan jössz?
Where do you come from?

Hova mentek fürödni?
Where are you going swimming?

The following common adverbs occur with one or more directional pendants, some with comparative or superlative forms as well. As can be seen in the table, the paradigm is not as complete as with the other deictic elements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motion toward</th>
<th>No motion</th>
<th>No motion comparat/superlative</th>
<th>Motion away</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>home</td>
<td>haza</td>
<td>itthon²</td>
<td>itthonról</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home</td>
<td>haza</td>
<td>otthon</td>
<td>otthonról</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>together</td>
<td>együvé</td>
<td>együtt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>together</td>
<td>össze</td>
<td>össze</td>
<td>összébb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inside</td>
<td>bentre</td>
<td>benn–bent</td>
<td>beljebb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inside, within</td>
<td>belülre</td>
<td>belül</td>
<td>legbelül</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outside</td>
<td>kintre</td>
<td>kinn–kint</td>
<td>kijebb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outside, besides</td>
<td>kívülre</td>
<td>kívül</td>
<td>legkívül</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>down(stairs)</td>
<td>lentre</td>
<td>lenn–lent</td>
<td>lejjebb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up (above), upstairs</td>
<td>fentre</td>
<td>fenn–fent</td>
<td>fejjebb–följebb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above</td>
<td>felülre</td>
<td>felül</td>
<td>legfelül</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below, bottom</td>
<td>alulra</td>
<td>alul</td>
<td>aláb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>near</td>
<td>közere</td>
<td>közel</td>
<td>közelebb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>front</td>
<td>előre</td>
<td>elől</td>
<td>legelől</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>back</td>
<td>hátra</td>
<td>hátal</td>
<td>leghátul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hátrébb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>side</td>
<td>félre</td>
<td>oldalt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elsewhere</td>
<td>máshova</td>
<td>másutt</td>
<td>máshonnan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>far</td>
<td>messzire</td>
<td>messze</td>
<td>messzebb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distant</td>
<td>távolra</td>
<td>távol</td>
<td>távolabb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² itthon refers to home when the speaker is at the home; otthon refers to home when the speaker is elsewhere.
11.4.2 Compass points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hungarian</th>
<th>Postpositional Marking</th>
<th>Case Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>north</td>
<td>észak</td>
<td>északról</td>
<td>északon északra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>south</td>
<td>dél</td>
<td>délről</td>
<td>délen délre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>east</td>
<td>kelet</td>
<td>keletről</td>
<td>keleten keletre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>west</td>
<td>nyugat</td>
<td>nyugatról</td>
<td>nyugaton nyugatra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>northwest</td>
<td>észak-nyugat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>northeast</td>
<td>észak-kelet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>southwest</td>
<td>dél-nyugat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>southeast</td>
<td>dél-kelet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.5 Time expressions

Time expressions may be conveyed with the use of cases, postpositions, a combination of the two, or no marking at all.

11.5.1 Many time expressions are fixed – requiring no further case marking or postpositions:

- addig: up until then
- akkor: at that time; then
- az előbb: just a moment ago
- az idén: this year
- azonnal: immediately
- eddig: up until now
- ekkor: at this time; then
- eleinte: at first
- máskor: at some other time
- még: yet, still
- még nem: not yet
- még mindig: still
- mindig: always
- mindjárt: soon, immediately
- most: now
- mostanában: nowadays
élőször  first, the first time  múltkor  last time, recently  
egyelőre  for the time being  néha  sometimes  
egy pillanat  (in) a moment  nemrég  recently  
éppen (most)  just now  nemsokára  soon  
gyakran  often  nyomban  at once  
hamar  soon  örökké  forever  
holnap  tomorrow  régen  a long time ago  
holnapután  day after tomorrow  régóta  since a long time  
jövőre  next year  rítkán  rarely  
később  later  rögtön  immediately  
későn  late  sokáig  for a long time  
korán, korábban  early, earlier  tavaly  last year  
ma  today  tegnap  yesterday  
majd  soon, in a while, later  tegnapelőtt  day before yesterday  
már  already, now  többé nem  no longer  
már nem  no more, no longer  többé soha  never more  

Holnap Budapesten leszek, és holnapután Prágába utazom.  
Tomorrow I will be in Budapest and the day after tomorrow I travel to Prague.

Tavaly rengetetget havazott, de az idei évre inkább esőt jósolnak.  
Last year it snowed a lot, but this year they are predicting more rain.

Nemsokára otthon leszünk.  
We'll be home soon.

Majd felhívlak, mikor több időm lesz.  
I'll call you (soon, later) when I have more time.
Régen gyakran szokta mondani, hogy szeret, de most már nagyon ritkán mondja.
A long time ago he would often tell me that he loved me, but now he says it very rarely.

Mikor először volt Londonban, nem tudott még angolul.
The first time he was in London he didn’t yet speak English.

11.5.2 Vague time

akármikor  whenever
bármikor  anytime, whenever
valaha  once, in the past
valamikor  at some time, sometime

Bármikor jöhetsz, csak gyere!
You can come any time, just come!

Valaha egy hatalmas kastély volt itt.
Once there was an enormous castle here.

Valamikor biztosan hallottam már azt a darabot, csak nem emlékszem, hogy mikor.
I’m sure I’ve heard that piece at some time, I just don’t remember when.

11.5.3 Dates

Dates are expressed by giving the year first, then the month, and finally the day of the month expressed as the ordinal number with the third person singular possessive suffix. There is a period after the year and the month is not capitalized.

1989. október 23-a  (Ezerkilencszáznyolcvankilenc október huszonharmadika)

2000. június 17-e  (Kétezer június tizenhetedike)

To indicate ‘on’ a certain date, add the superessive case (ö/e/ö-n) to the date:
Június 17-én születtem. I was born on June 17.
Január elsején pihenni szoktunk. We usually relax on the first of January.
Hatodikán jön. He’s coming on the sixth.

11.5.4 Times of day

hajnal dawn reggel (in the) early morning
délelőtt morning, before noon nappal during the day
délután (in the) afternoon alkony twilight
este (in the) evening éjszaka (at) night

11.5.5 Days of the week

Use the superessive case (o/e/o-n) to indicate ‘on’. (Except for vasárnap ‘on Sunday’.) Note that the days of the week are not capitalized.

hétfő Monday hétfőn on Monday
kedd Tuesday kedden on Tuesday
szerda Wednesday szerdán on Wednesday
csütörtök Thursday csütörökön on Thursday
péntek Friday pénteken on Friday
szombat Saturday szombaton on Saturday
vasárnap Sunday vasárnap on Sunday

Hétfőn megyünk vissza dolgozni. We are going back to work on Monday.

Szerdán lesz a zongoraórám. My piano lesson will be on Wednesday.

Vasárnap meglátogatjuk a szüleinket. On Sunday we’ll visit our parents.
Only when modified by ez ‘this’ or az ‘that’ does vasárnap ‘Sunday’ require the superessive (-n).

Ezen a vasárnapon lemegyünk Szegedre.
This Sunday we are going to Szeged.

11.5.6 Months
The inessive case (-ban/-ben) is used to express ‘in’, ‘during’ a month. Note that names of the months are not capitalized in Hungarian.

január  januárban  in January
február  februárban  in February
március  márciusban  in March
április  áprilisban  in April
május  májusban  in May
június  júniusban  in June
július  júliusban  in July
augusztus  augusztusban  in August
szeptember  szeptemberben  in September
október  októberben  in October
november  novemberben  in November
december  decemberben  in December

Júliusban lemegyünk a Balatonra.
In July we are going to the Balaton.

Decemberben jönnek a barátaim.
My friends are coming in December.

Novemberben esni szokott az eső.
It usually rains in November.
11.5.7 Time expressions using cases

These are sometimes limited to certain lexical items.

11.5.7.1 Superessive: (o/e/ö)-n

Use with the following words to mean ‘during’ or ‘in’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hét</td>
<td>week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nap</td>
<td>day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyár</td>
<td>summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tél</td>
<td>winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>héten</td>
<td>during the week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>napon</td>
<td>on (a) day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyáron</td>
<td>in/during the summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>télen</td>
<td>in/during the winter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minden héten írok a szüleimnek.
I write my parents every week.

Múlt nyáron Japánba utaztunk.
We traveled to Japan last summer.

Télen korcsolyázni lehet a tavon.
In the winter one can skate on the lake.

Melyik napon jössz?
What day are you coming?

11.5.7.2 Inessive (-ban/-ben)

Use with the following words to mean ‘during’ or ‘in’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hónap</td>
<td>month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>század</td>
<td>century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perc</td>
<td>minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>idő</td>
<td>time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dél</td>
<td>noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>év</td>
<td>year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pillanat</td>
<td>moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>másodperc</td>
<td>second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kor</td>
<td>age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Melyik hónapban születtél?
(In) which month were you born?

Rossz időben érkeztek.
They arrived at a bad time.
Ebben az évben kezdett iskolába járni.
She began school this year.

Délben ebédelni szoktak.
They usually eat lunch at noon.

**11.5.7.3 Sublative (-ra/-re)**

Use this case to indicate ‘by’ a specified time:

**Hatra/</span>Hat órára otthon leszek.**
I'll be home by six.

**Hétfőre kell befejezni a munkát.**
The work must be done by Monday.

Use to indicate ‘intended’ time (note the opposition with the -ig case):

**Egy hétre mentem, de egy hónapig maradtam.**
I went for a week, but I stayed a month.

**Mennyi időre utazol el?**
How long are you traveling for?

Use in tandem with the allative (-hoz/-hez/-höz) in the following construction:

**mához egy hétre**
a week from today

Use with the delative (-ról/-ről) in the following construction:

**napról napra**
from day to day

**időről időre**
from time to time

**11.5.7.4 Terminative -ig**

Use this case to mean ‘for’ or ‘until’ a terminal point of time (often used in conjunction with the ablative -tól/-től).

**3-tól 6-ig leszek az irodámban.**
I will be in my office from 3 to 6.

**Reggeltől estéig beszéltek.**
They spoke from morning until night.

**Két évig laktunk Debrecenben.**
We lived in Debrecen for two years.
A tanfolyam egy hónapig tartott.
The course lasted one month.

Reggelig várta.
They waited until morning.

11.5.7.5 Instrumental -val/-vel
Use this case with the following words to mean ‘during’ or ‘in’.

tavasz  spring  tavasszal  in the spring
ősz    fall    összel    in the fall
éj      night   éjjel     at night
nap     day     nappal    during the day.

Tavasszal találkoztunk.
We met in spring.

Ősszel sokat esik az eső.
It rains a lot in the fall.

Ebben a városban az autóbuszok éjjel-nappal járnak.
In this city the buses run day and night.

11.5.7.6 Distributive (-Vnként)
(See section 6.4.1 on how to suffix the distributive.) This case is used to express regularly recurring time.

Hetenként hívja fel az édesanyját.
He calls his mother every week.

Óránként közlik a híreket.
They announce the news every hour.

A buszok tíz percenként járnak.
The buses run every ten minutes.

11.5.7.7 Temporal (-kor)
This case is used with the hours of the day and some holidays.

Karácsonykor a gyerekek aranyosan viselkednek.
At Christmas children behave nicely.
Hétkor fog telefonálni.
She will call at seven o’clock.

Temporal-distributive (-nta/nte)
Use with the following words to mean ‘per’, ‘every’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nap</td>
<td>day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hó</td>
<td>month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hét</td>
<td>week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>óra</td>
<td>hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naponta</td>
<td>daily, every day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>havonta</td>
<td>monthly, every month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hetente</td>
<td>weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>óránta</td>
<td>hourly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Havonta fizetnek.
I get paid monthly.

Hetente háromszor találkoznak.
They meet three times per week.

Multiplicative (-szor/-szer/-ször)
Add this case to numbers and some expressions of quantity to indicate the number of times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>egyszer</td>
<td>once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kétszer</td>
<td>twice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>háromszor</td>
<td>three times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>négyeszer</td>
<td>four times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ötször</td>
<td>five times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hatszor</td>
<td>six times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hétszer</td>
<td>seven times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyolcszor</td>
<td>eight times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kilencszer</td>
<td>nine times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tízszer</td>
<td>ten times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sokszor</td>
<td>many times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>többször</td>
<td>several times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Milliószor puszillak.
I send you a million kisses. (lit., I kiss you a million times.)

Csak egyszer voltam Lengyelországban.
I’ve only been to Poland once.

Naponta többször telefonál.
He calls several times a day.
Add -szor/-szer/-ször to fractions to indicate the ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘third’, etc. time. Note the irregular form for ‘first’.

**először** (the) first time  **harmadszor** (the) third time  
**másodszor** (the) second time  **negyedszer** (the) fourth time

**Most először vagyok Tahitin.**
I am in Tahiti now for the first time.

**Csak akkor értettem, mikor másodszor mondtat.**
I only understood it the second time he said it.

**11.5.7.10** Accusative (-t)

This case has a limited use in time expressions, usually occurring with only a few verbs.

**Két hetet töltöttünk Spanyolországban.**
We spent two weeks in Spain.

**Egy órát vártunk.**
We waited one hour.

**11.5.8** Time expressions with postpositions

(Note that some postpositions require a case on the time expression preceding them.)

**közben** during  **Senki nem beszél az előadás közben.**
No one speaks during the performance.

**alatt** during  **(With this meaning alatt is a synonym of közben.)**  
**A háború alatt sokan éheztek.**
Many people went hungry during the war.

**alatt** under/ (with)in  **(With this meaning alatt is a synonym of belül.)**  
**Egy óra alatt fejeztem be a házi feladatot.**
I finished the homework in (under) an hour.

**után** after  **Hívjál fel tíz óra után.**
Call me after ten o’clock.

**előtt** before  **Magyar óra előtt mindig találkoznak.**
They always meet before Hungarian class.
Use with the ablative case -tól/-től:
-kezdve since
Januárttól kezdve/fogva már nem jár az előadásra.
She has not been coming to the lecture since January.

A tárgyalások során sokat tanultak egymásról.
They learned a lot about each other in the course of the negotiations.

A fiúk egy hónapon belül jön haza.
Our son will be home (with)in a month.

Egész életen át vártam rá.
I waited a lifetime for her.

Négy és öt óra között az irodámban leszek.
I’ll be in my office between four and five o’clock.

Hét óra hosszat dolgoztak a házi feladatukon.
They worked for seven hours long on their homework.

Három nap múlva kezdődik a vizsgaidőszak.
The exam term begins in three days.

Tíz óra felé kezd fáradt lenni.
Towards ten o’clock he starts to get tired.

Nyolc óra körül vacsorázunk.
We eat dinner around eight o’clock.

Éjfél tájban szokott hazajönni.
She usually comes home around midnight.

These are all synonyms.

Though not a true postposition, -számra combines with nouns similarly.

A régi barátok óraszámra tudtak beszélni.
The old friends could talk for hours on end.
Hétszámra várta a hivatalos engedélyt.  
They waited for weeks on end for official permission.

11.5.9 ‘Since’

Hungarian has two ways of expressing ‘since’ or ‘for’ a period of time. Note that because the action continues into the present, the verb must be in the present tense.

the postposition óta:

1995 óta Budapesten lakunk.  
We have been living in Budapest since 1995.

Két év óta vagyok itt.  
I have been here for two years.

Mióta tanulsz magyarul?  
How long have you been studying Hungarian?

the third person singular possessive (j)a/(j)e:

Két éve vagyok itt.  
I have been here for two years.

Három hónapja dolgozunk rajta.  
We have been working on it for three months.

Mennyi ideje tanulsz magyarul?  
How long have you been studying Hungarian?

11.5.10 ‘Ago’

Two constructions can be used to express ‘ago’. The verb must be in the past tense.

The posposition ezelőtt with -val/-vel:

Egy évvel ezelőtt kezdtem magyarul tanulni.  
I began to study Hungarian one year ago.

Itt volt három perccel ezelőtt.  
He was here three minutes ago.
The third person singular possessive (j)a/(j)e:

Egy éve kezdtem magyarul tanulni.
I began to study Hungarian one year ago.

Itt volt három perce.
He was here three minutes ago.

Since both the ‘since’ and ‘ago’ constructions use the third person singular possessive the verb tense may be the only way to distinguish between the meaning of the two:

Három hónapja dolgozunk rajta.
We have been working on it for three months.

Három hónapja dolgoztunk rajta.
We worked on it three months ago.

11.5.11 Every

The word ‘every’, can be expressed with either the distributive case (-Vnként) or the word minden may be used before the time expression.

Minden kedden/Keddenként találkoztak.
They met every Tuesday.

Minden hónapban/Havonként legalább egyszer mennek hangversenyre.
Every month they go to at least one concert.

11.5.12 Usually

The word ‘usually’ may be expressed by either the adverbial általában or the verbal construction with szokott. Szokott may conjugate for any person in both the indefinite and definite conjugations; though it means ‘usually’, szokott is only used in the past tense conjugation. It takes an infinitival complement.

Reggel teázni szoktam.
I usually drink tea in the morning.

Hétkor szokott felkelni.
She usually gets up at seven o’clock.
Tavasszal esős idő szokott lenni.
In the spring the weather is usually rainy.

Mit szoktál csinálni a szabad idődben?
What do you usually do in your free time?

11.5.13 Clock time

The question Mennyi az idő? or Hány óra van?/Hány óra? ‘What time is it?’ may be answered using quarter-hour segments. The expressions refer to the coming full hour. The word óra ‘hour’ cannot be used with any fraction of the hour. The word van ‘is’ is always optional.

It is 1:00. Egy óra (van).
It is 1:15. Negyed kettő (van). (lit.) a quarter (on the way) to two
It is 1:30. Fél kettő (van). (lit.) half (on the way to) two
It is 1:45. Háromnegyed kettő (lit.) three quarters (on the way) (van). to two

Otherwise clock time is expressed with reference to the nearest quarter using the following pattern of postpositions:

X perc múlva = in X minutes
X perccel múlt = X minutes past

5:55 öt perc múlva hat (óra) (lit.) in five minutes it will be 6:00

These postpositional patterns are also used with quarter-hour time segments:

2:13 két perc múlva negyed három
(lit.) in two minutes it will be 2:15

3:47 két perccel múlt háromnegyed négy
(lit.) it is two minutes past 3:45

7:33 három perccel múlt fél nyolc
(lit.) it is three minutes past half of eight

Official times may be stated using the full numbers. The 24-hour clock may be used:
In response to the question Mikor? ‘when’, Hánykor?/Hány órakor ‘at what time (on the clock)’ the temporal case -kor must be added to the end of the time expression.

Hánykor jöttek? Hétkor/Hét órakor.
When did they come? At seven/seven o’clock.

Tizenhárom óra negyvenhárom perckor indul a vonat.
The train leaves at 13:43.

11.5.14 Interrogatives of time

Mikor? When?
Hánykor? At what time (on the clock)?
Mennyi időre? For how long? By what time?
Mikorra? By what time?
Mikortól (kezdve/fogva)? Since when? From what time?
Mettől (kezdve/fogva)? Since when? From what time?
Meddig? Until when? For how long? How much time?
Mennyi ideig? Until when/for how long?
Mennyi időt? How much time?
Mióta? Since when?
Mennyi idő múlva? In (after) how much time?
Miközben? During what time? When?
Mennyi idővel ezelőtt? How long ago?
Mennyi idő alatt? During how much time?
Mennyi időn belül? Within how much time?
Mennyi időn keresztül? For how long a time?
## Adverbial pronouns

The adverbial pronouns reflect all the meanings of manner, space and
time found among the adverbs. The following chart summarizes the
possible adverbial pronouns. (The relative adverbials are formed by
prefixing a- to the interrogatives.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adverbial pronouns</th>
<th>Interrogative</th>
<th>Demonstrative</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Indefinite</th>
<th>Indefinite-2</th>
<th>Universal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>hova</strong> where to</td>
<td>ide to here</td>
<td>sehova from</td>
<td>valahova</td>
<td>akárhova</td>
<td>mindenhova</td>
<td>mindenüvé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>oda to there</td>
<td>nowhere</td>
<td>to somewhere</td>
<td>bárhova to anywhere</td>
<td>mindenüvé to everywhere</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>hol</strong> where</td>
<td>itt here</td>
<td>sehol nowhere</td>
<td>valahol somewhere</td>
<td>akárhol bárhol anywhere</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ott there</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mindenhol mindenütt everywhere</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>honnan</strong> where from</td>
<td>innen from here</td>
<td>sehonnan from nowhere</td>
<td>akárhonnan bárhonnan from anywhere</td>
<td>mindenhonnan mindenünnten from everywhere</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>merre</strong> in which direction</td>
<td>erre this way</td>
<td>semerre in no direction</td>
<td>valamerre in some direction</td>
<td>akármerre bármerre in any direction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>arra that way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mindenfelé in every direction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>meddig</strong> how far how long</td>
<td>eddig until nowhere</td>
<td>semeddig for no length of time or distance</td>
<td>valameddig for some length of time or distance</td>
<td>akármeddig bármeddig for any length of time or distance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>addig until now/there</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mindeddig so far, up until now</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mikor</strong> when</td>
<td>ekkor at this time</td>
<td>semmikor at no time</td>
<td>valaha once, sometime</td>
<td>akármikor bármikor whenever</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>akkor at that time</td>
<td>soha sometime</td>
<td>valamikor at some time</td>
<td>mindenkor always</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>hogy(an)</strong> how</td>
<td>igy in this way</td>
<td>sehogy(an) in no way</td>
<td>valahogy(an) in some way</td>
<td>akárhogy(an) mindenképpen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>úgy in that way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mindenhogy(an)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bárhogy(an) in any way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>anyway, in any case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11.6.1 *Interrogative*

- Mikor született Bartók? When was Bartók born?
- Hova akarsz menni ma este? Where do you want to go tonight?
- Honnan jön a lárma? Where is the noise coming from?

11.6.2 *Relative*

The relative adverbials are formed by prefixing a- to the interrogative. An exception is amíg ‘while’, which often replaces ameddig ‘as long as’.

- Odaraktam a kabátomat, ahol a többi kabát van. I put my coat where the other coats are.
- Amióta találkoztam vele, másra nem is tudok gondolni. Since I met him I can’t think of anything else.
- Amíg veszekedtek a nappaliban, leégett a vacsora a konyhában. While they were arguing in the living room, the dinner burned in the kitchen.

11.6.3 *Demonstrative*

- Erre gyere, erre! Come here, this way!
- Úgy kell vágni a hajamat, hogy ne lássák, hogy kopaszodom. You have to cut my hair so that you can’t see that I’m going bald.

All demonstrative pronouns may be prefixed with ugyan- to denote ‘same’.

- Szólt a telefon és ugyanakkor csengettek. The phone rang and at the same time the doorbell did too.
- Most már ugyanúgy teniszezel, mint a tanárod. You play tennis the same way now as your teacher.
**11.6.4 Cataphoric use of demonstrative adverbials**

As with other demonstrative pronouns, the demonstrative adverbials may be used to refer ahead to a forthcoming clause or back to an earlier statement. The back vowel demonstratives refer ahead; front vowel demonstratives refer back.

> Úgy beszél franciául az a német lány, mintha Párizsban született volna.
> That German girl speaks French as if she were born in Paris.

> Bárcsak így tudnék franciául én is.
> If only I knew French like that.

> Arra megyek, amerre viszel.
> I’ll go where you take me.

> Addig üsd a vasat, amíg meleg!
> Strike while the iron is hot!

> Ott akarok lakni, ahol csend van.
> I want to live where it is quiet.

**11.6.5 Negative**

The verb must always be negated when using negative adverbials (double negation); the exceptions are sohasem, sosem ‘never’ where the negative particle is already built into the word.

> Sohasem/sosem voltunk Kuala Lumpurban.
> We have never been to Kuala Lumpur.

> Sehova sem megyek késő este.
> I never go anywhere late at night.

**11.6.6 Indefinite**

As is found in the nouns and adjectives, there are several indefinite pronouns. The vala- prefix denotes ‘some (undefined)’ and the akár- and bár- prefixes denote ‘any, ~ever’

> Valamikor szeptemberben ismerkedtek meg.
> They became acquainted sometime in September.
Akármikor telefonálok, elfoglalt.
Whenever I call she's busy.

Bármikor jöhetsz, csak gyere!
You may come any time, just come!

11.6.7 Universal

Mindenképpen keress fel, ha Budapesten vagy.
No matter what, look me up if you are in Budapest.

Mindenhol koszos volt.
It was dirty everywhere.

Imre mindig csak enni akar.
Imre always wants to eat.
Word formation (also called derivation) is perhaps the richest area of Hungarian grammar. Suffixes can be added singly or in combination to change one part of speech into another or otherwise qualify the root. The verb megszentségteleníti ‘defile’, ‘profane’ is an illustration of how several suffixes and a prefix combine with a single root.

- **szent** holy; saint
- **szentség** holiness, sanctity (addition of the noun-forming suffix -ség ‘-ness’)
- **szentségtelen** impious, sacrilegious (addition of the adjective-forming suffix -telen ‘un-’)
- **megszentségteleníti** defile, profane (addition of verb-forming suffix -ít and coverb *meg*)

Some of the suffixes are extremely productive, others are more limited in their use. This chapter lists the most important derivational suffixes.

### 12.1 Noun-forming suffixes

#### 12.1.1 Nouns formed from verbs

### 12.1.1.1 -ás/-és

This suffix is added to verb stems; it usually attaches to the same stems as the present participle. It is 100 percent productive (may be used with all verbs) and denotes the (abstract) action. It is translated by the gerund in English.
dohányzik  smoke  dohányzás  act of smoking
énekel  sing  éneklés  act of singing
ír  write  írás  act of writing
olvas  read  olvasás  act of reading

Abbahagyta az olvasást.  He stopped reading.
Nem tetszett neki az éneklés.  He didn’t like the singing.

The -ás/-és suffix may also denote the result of an action.
főz  cook  főzés  cooking, cuisine
ír  write  írás  writing (sample)
kér  ask for  kérés  request
mond  say  mondás  saying

Nagyon találó az a közmondás.  That proverb is quite apt.
Lenne egy pár kérésem.  I have a few requests.

12.1.1.2 -atl-et
This suffix is added to verb stems to denote a result of the verb.
épül  build  épület  building
felad  assign  feladat  assignment
felel  answer  felelet  answer, response
ír  write  irat  document
mond  say  mondat  sentence

12.1.1.3 -alom/-elem, -(a)dalom/-(e)delem
This suffix is attached to verbs to form collective or abstract nouns
forr  boil  forradalom  revolution
hat  have an effect  hatalom  power
ír  write  irodalom  literature
jön  come  jövedelem  income
Noun-forming suffixes

12.1.1.4 (o)mány/-(e)mény

This suffix is added to verbs to denote a result of the action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ad</td>
<td>adomány</td>
<td>grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fest</td>
<td>festmény</td>
<td>painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gyűjt</td>
<td>gyűjtemény</td>
<td>collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kezd</td>
<td>kezdemény</td>
<td>initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>költ</td>
<td>költemény</td>
<td>poetry, poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>olvas</td>
<td>olvasmány</td>
<td>a piece/selection of reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>süt</td>
<td>sütemény</td>
<td>pastry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tud</td>
<td>tudomány</td>
<td>knowledge, science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.1.1.5 -vány/-vény

This suffix is added to verbs to denote a result or product of an action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>áll</td>
<td>állvány</td>
<td>stand, scaffolding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>igazol</td>
<td>igazolvány</td>
<td>certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jön</td>
<td>jövevény</td>
<td>newcomer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kér</td>
<td>kérvény</td>
<td>questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kiad</td>
<td>kiadvány</td>
<td>publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>köt</td>
<td>kötvény</td>
<td>bond, security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutat</td>
<td>mutatvány</td>
<td>specimen; spectacle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.1.2 Nouns formed from noun, adjective or verb stems

12.1.2.1 -ász/-ész

This suffix is added to stems (of nouns, adjectives or verbs) to form occupations.
 Bánya  
mine  
bányász  
miner

Épít  
build  
építész  
arist

Erdő  
forest  
erdész  
forester

Gyógy-\(^1\)  
cure  
gyógyász  
doctor

Hal  
fish  
halász  
fisherman

Mű  
opus  
művész  
artist

Nyelv  
language  
nyelvész  
linguist

Szín  
scene  
színész  
actor

Szobor  
statue  
szobrász  
sculptor

Szül  
give birth  
szülész  
obstetrician

### 12.1.2.2 -ászat/-észet

This suffix (formed by adding -at/-et to the previous suffix) is added to stems to denote the field of work associated with the aforementioned occupations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
<th>Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Épít</td>
<td>build</td>
<td>építész</td>
<td>architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyógy-(^2)</td>
<td>cure</td>
<td>gyógyászat</td>
<td>medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mű</td>
<td>opus</td>
<td>művészet</td>
<td>art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyelv</td>
<td>language</td>
<td>nyelvész</td>
<td>linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szobor</td>
<td>statue</td>
<td>szobrász</td>
<td>sculpture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szül</td>
<td>give birth</td>
<td>szülész</td>
<td>obstetrics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 12.1.2.3 -ista

Similar to the English suffix `-ist’, this suffix is added to roots to denote one belonging to the general activity or school of the root.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alkohol</td>
<td>alcohol</td>
<td>alkoholista</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyetem</td>
<td>university</td>
<td>egyetemista</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) The hyphen indicates that this form is found only as a stem, or combinatory form, i.e., it does not occur as a self-standing word.

\(^2\) See n. 1 above.
This suffix is found in many cognates with English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hungarian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hungarian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>buddhista</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>nacionalista</td>
<td>nationalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>germanista</td>
<td>Germanist</td>
<td>optimista</td>
<td>optimist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imperialista</td>
<td>imperialist</td>
<td>pesszimista</td>
<td>pessimist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kapitalista</td>
<td>capitalist</td>
<td>szocialista</td>
<td>socialist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is perhaps the most widely used derivational suffix. In addition to making nouns, its most common use is in forming adjectives (see section 12.2.2).

The suffix -s requires a linking vowel when attaching to stems ending in a consonant. In most cases, the choice of linking vowel is the same as in forming the plural. When adding the suffix -s to words ending in a or e, the vowel is lengthened to á, é, respectively; with stems ending in other vowels, there is no change in the stem.

The suffix -s makes nouns from other nouns to denote the person who operates or works at or with that noun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hungarian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>asztal</td>
<td>table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ének</td>
<td>song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>könyvtár</td>
<td>library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>óra</td>
<td>watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tánc</td>
<td>dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taxi</td>
<td>taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telefon</td>
<td>telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zöldség</td>
<td>vegetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asztalos</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>énekes</td>
<td>singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>könyvtáros</td>
<td>librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>órás</td>
<td>watchmaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>táncos</td>
<td>dancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taxis</td>
<td>taxi driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telefonos</td>
<td>telephone operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zöldséges</td>
<td>greengrocer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another widely used suffix, -ság/-ség makes nouns out of adjectives and other nouns. Its general meaning is similar to the English suffixes ‘-ness’ or ‘-hood’, but it has a collective function as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anya</td>
<td>mother</td>
<td>anyaság</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>barát</td>
<td>friend</td>
<td>barátság</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boldog</td>
<td>happy</td>
<td>boldogság</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buta</td>
<td>stupid</td>
<td>butaság</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>egész</td>
<td>whole</td>
<td>egészség</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hegység</td>
<td>mountain range</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>képtelen</td>
<td>incapable</td>
<td>képtelenség</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lehető</td>
<td>possible</td>
<td>lehetőség</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This suffix is added to a name or noun to mean ‘Mrs.’ or the person’s wife.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kövér Csaba</td>
<td>Csaba Kövér</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kövér Csabané</td>
<td>Mrs. Csaba Kövér</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kövérné</td>
<td>Mrs. Kövér</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pék</td>
<td>baker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pap</td>
<td>minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pékné</td>
<td>baker’s wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>papné</td>
<td>minister’s wife</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This suffix is added to a name or noun to denote the family, or usual entourage, of the person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kovács a Kovácsék</td>
<td>the Kovács family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyula a Gyuláék</td>
<td>Gyula and his family and/or friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 This suffix never lengthens a final a or e when attaching.
a barátmom my friend   a barátomék my friend and his family and/or friends

12.2 Adjective-forming suffixes

12.2.1 -i

This suffix forms adjectives from nouns, adverbs and postpositions.\(^4\)

12.2.1.1

It is often added to expressions of place or time and can be translated by ‘of’ or a possessive construction in English.

- fent  above  fenti lakás  upstairs apartment
- közel  nearby  közeli bolt  nearby store
- ma  today  mai újság  today’s newspaper
- tavaly  last year  tavalyi idő  last year’s weather
- utóbb  later  utóbbi évek  recent years

12.2.1.2

It is added to nouns to give them an attributive function.

- hegy  mountain  hegyi tó  mountain lake
- hely  place  helyi idő  local time
- nő  woman  női ruha  women’s clothing
- tavasz  spring  tavaszi zápor  spring shower

12.2.1.3

The suffix -i may be added to postpositions to turn the entire postpositional phrase into an attribute.

- a ház előtt  in front of the house
- a ház előtti kert  the garden in front of the house

\(^4\) See n. 3 above.
12.1.4

The suffix -i is 100 percent productive when added to place names to denote a person or other entity from that place. Note that although the place name is written with a capital letter, the adjectival form is not. Although the resulting forms always decline as adjectives, they may be used as nouns as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Adjective Form</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budapest</td>
<td>budapesti</td>
<td>(a person/thing) from Budapest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>londoni</td>
<td>(a person/thing) from London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrid</td>
<td>madridi</td>
<td>(a person/thing) from Madrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szeged</td>
<td>szegedi</td>
<td>(a person/thing) from Szeged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A budapestiek büszkék lehetnek a városukra.
People from Budapest can be proud of their city.

Külföldön a szegedi paprika a leghíresebb.
Paprika from Szeged is the most famous abroad.

12.2.2 -s

This suffix is added to nouns, adjectives and numerals to make new adjectives.

12.2.2.1

It has the meaning ‘endowed with’, ‘qualified as having’. This suffix also makes nouns (see section 12.1.2.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vaj</td>
<td>butter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vajas kenyér</td>
<td>bread and butter (lit., buttery bread)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>erdő</td>
<td>forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>erdős terület</td>
<td>wooded area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concrete characteristics of a person or thing can be expressed with the use of -s.

- név (name) neves professzor (famous professor)
- ötlet (idea) ötletes gyerek (clever or ingenious child)
- család (family) családos férfi (man with a family (children))
- kalap (hat) kalapos hölgy (lady with a hat)
- kert (garden) kertes ház (house with a garden)
- szemüveg (glasses) szemüveges bácsi (man (uncle) with glasses)

The suffix -s can be attached to time expressions to indicate duration. Note that the time expression is consequently written as one word.

- tiz perc (ten minutes) tizperces szünet (ten-minute break)
- egy év (one year) egyéves tanfolyam (one-year course)
- két hét (two weeks) kéthetes szabadság (two-week vacation)
- egy óra (one hour) egyórás előadás (one-hour lecture)

Attached to an adjective -s can modify the meaning of the adjective.

- barna (brown) barnás (brownish)
- beteg (sick) beteges (sickly, ailing)
- fiatal (young) fiatalos (youngish)
- magyar (Hungarian) magyaros (in a Hungarian style)
- zöld (green) zöldeskék (greenish-blue)

It can be attached to numerals to yield both adjectives and nouns.
This suffix is attached to nouns, adjectives, and verbs and denotes 'without', or 'qualified as not having'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>arány</td>
<td>proportion</td>
<td>aránytalan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rend</td>
<td>order</td>
<td>rendetlen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ismer</td>
<td>know</td>
<td>ismeretlen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The suffix has three variants. Although there are many exceptions, the following are the tendencies in forming words with this suffix.

1. **-tlan, -tlen** is added to stems ending in a vowel; word-final vowel a or e is lengthened to á or é, respectively.

   - béke (peace) → béketlen (restless, turbulent, quarrelsome)
   - erő (force) → erőtlen (weak, feeble, powerless)
   - hiba (mistake) → hibátlan (faultless)
   - só (salt) → sótlan (unsalted)

2. **-talan, -telen** is added to stems ending in a single consonant:

   - bátor (brave) → bátortalan (cowardly)
   - érték (value) → értékten (worthless)
   - haszon (use) → haszontalan (useless)

3. **-atlan, -atlen** is added to all verb stems.

   - ismer (know) → ismeretlen (unknown)
   - kér (ask for) → kéretlen (unrequested, unsolicited)
   - vár (expect, wait) → váratlan (unexpected)
This suffix is commonly found with verbs formed with the potential suffix -hat/-het and forms the antonym of the potential present participle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Potential</th>
<th>Antonym</th>
<th>Antonym Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eszik</td>
<td>eat</td>
<td>ehető</td>
<td>edible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ehetetlen</td>
<td>inedible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hisz</td>
<td>believe</td>
<td>hihető</td>
<td>believable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hihetetlen</td>
<td>unbelievable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lát</td>
<td>see</td>
<td>látható</td>
<td>visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>láthatatlan</td>
<td>invisible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>megváltoztat</td>
<td>change</td>
<td>megváltoztatható</td>
<td>changeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>megváltoztathatlan</td>
<td>immutable, irrevocable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes more than one variant can be attached to the same root, yielding two different meanings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>íz</td>
<td>taste, flavor</td>
<td>ízetlen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tasteless (abstract, as of decoration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>íztelen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tasteless (concrete, as of food)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gond</td>
<td>worry, care</td>
<td>gondatlan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>careless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>gondtalan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>carefree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lélek</td>
<td>soul, spirit</td>
<td>lelketlen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>heartless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lélektelen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lacking in spirit or enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tárgy</td>
<td>object, theme</td>
<td>tárgyatlan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(of sentences or verbs) having no object, intransitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tárgytalan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(a matter) not worth discussion, invalid, unnecessary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unlike most adjectives, those formed with -tlan/-tlen and their variants form their adverbs with -ul/-ül.

hibátlan faultless hibátlanul faultlessly
váratlan unexpected váratlanul unexpectedly

The suffixes -s and -tlan/-tlen (and its variants) often form antonyms.

arányos proportionate aránytalan disproportionate
egészséges healthy egészségtelen unhealthy
figyelmes considerate figyelmetlen inconsiderate
hasznos useful haszontalan useless
nős married man nőtlen bachelor
rendes tidy rendetlen disorderly
rendszeres systematic rendszertelen unsystematic
sós salty sótlan saltless
udvarias polite udvariatlan impolite
ügyes clever, agile ügyetlen awkward, inept

This suffix has a similar meaning to the suffix -s.

It makes adjectives out of nouns and is used when it is in turn modified by another adjective.

fekete haj black hair fekete hajú lány a girl with black hair
kék szem blue eyes kék szemű kisfiú blue-eyed boy
jó étvágy good appetite jó étvágyú beteg a patient with a good appetite
Adjectives derived by -ú/-ű may have a stronger (more permanent, inalienable) connection to the noun they are modifying. Adjectives derived by -s (may) have a looser (more temporary) connection to the noun.

hosszú ruhás lány  a girl with a long dress
hosszú hajú lány  a girl with long hair

The variants -jú and -jű are attached to stems ending in a vowel; if the final vowel is a or e it is lengthened to á or é, respectively.

erő force  nagy erejű  having great power
téma theme  tabu témájú  having a taboo theme

This suffix forms adjectives from verb stems. It denotes an inclination to the activity expressed in the next stem.

érez feel  érzékeny  sensitive
félt fear for; be jealous of  féltékeny  jealous
folyik flow  folyékony  fluent
hajlik bend, lean  hajlékony  flexible, pliable
tör break  törékeny  fragile

This suffix is added to nouns to form adjectives of measure or size.
méter meter  méternyi  (one) meter long
pillanat moment  pillanatnyi  (lasting) a moment
verb-forming suffixes

12.3.1 -z(ik)

This suffix yields perhaps the most common way of making verbs out of nouns. When added to stems ending in a consonant it requires a linking vowel – usually the same vowel as is required for forming the plural; when added to stems ending in a or e, the vowel is lengthened to á or é, respectively. These verbs may or may not take the -ik ending. The -z(ik) suffix has many uses; only a few are mentioned here.

12.3.1.1

This suffix is commonly added to stems to denote using the stem in playing sports or music or otherwise spending time at an activity.

- focizik: play soccer
- fuvolázik: play the flute
- kosárlabdázik: play basketball
- levelezik: correspond
- teniszezik: play tennis
- zongorázik: play the piano

12.3.1.2

It can be used with foods or meals.

- kávézik: drink coffee
- reggelizik: eat breakfast

---

5 If the stem is a low-vowel noun that loses length when forming the plural, it will usually lose length when suffixing -z(ik) and -l as well: út ‘trip’, utazik ‘travel’; nyár ‘summer’, nyaral ‘spend summer vacation’.
sör  beer  sörözik  drink beer

tea  tea  teázik  drink tea

vacsora  dinner  vacsorázik  eat dinner

12.3.1.3

To use an instrument or tool.

csavar  screw  csavaroz  fasten with a screw
gereblye  rake  gereblyézik  use a rake
kocsi  car  kocsizik  go by car, drive

12.3.1.4

To supply/furnish with an object.

fal  wall  falaz  put up a wall
fegyver  weapon  felfegyverezik  arm

12.3.2  -l6

This suffix is also widely used to form verbs from nouns. When added to stems ending in a consonant, it requires a linking vowel (usually the same one as required when forming the plural of the stem). When added to stems ending in a or e, the vowel is lengthened to á or é, respectively.

ebéd  lunch  ebédel  eat lunch
ének  song  énekel  sing
kéz  hand  kezel  handle, treat
lapát  shovel  lapátol  dig with a shovel
nyár  summer  nyaral  spend the summer (vacation)
vásár  market  vásárol  shop

See n. 5 above.
Note that the same stem may take both verb-forming suffixes and result in two different meanings:

rend  order  rendez  organize  rendel  place an order
vizsga  test  vizsgázik  take a test  vizsgál  examine

12.3.3  -ít

This suffix makes transitive verbs. It is added to stems ending in a consonant; if the stem ends in a vowel, the vowel is dropped before suffixing. Verbs ending in -ít are often the transitive counterpart of the intransitive verbs ending in -ul/-ül; see section 12.3.5.

12.3.3.1

This suffix is commonly added to adjectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>csúnya</th>
<th>ugly</th>
<th>csúnyít</th>
<th>make ugly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>éles</td>
<td>sharp</td>
<td>élesít</td>
<td>sharpen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fekete</td>
<td>black</td>
<td>feketít</td>
<td>blacken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kész</td>
<td>ready</td>
<td>készít</td>
<td>prepare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nagyobb</td>
<td>bigger</td>
<td>nagyobbít</td>
<td>enlarge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>széles</td>
<td>wide</td>
<td>szélesít</td>
<td>widen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>szép</td>
<td>beautiful</td>
<td>szépít</td>
<td>beautify</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.3.3.2

It may be added to nouns and other roots.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>alak</th>
<th>form</th>
<th>alakít</th>
<th>shape (something)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>alap</td>
<td>base</td>
<td>alapít</td>
<td>establish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gyógy⁷</td>
<td>cure</td>
<td>gyógyít</td>
<td>heal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tan</td>
<td>study</td>
<td>tanít</td>
<td>teach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁷ See n. 1 above.
This suffix is found on transitive verbs. It is not nearly as productive as the transitive suffix -ít. It is often attached to stems that occur only as roots of derivations. These verbs often have intransitive counterparts ending in -ad/-ed; see section 12.3.6.

ébreszt  wake someone up  halaszt  postpone  
fáraszt  tire (someone)  ijeszt  frighten, startle  
fejleszt  develop  riaszt  alarmed

This suffix forms intransitive verbs and often is the counterpart to the transitive verbs formed with -ít. It is added to stems ending in a consonant; should the stem end in a vowel, the vowel is dropped.

ép  intact  épül  be built  
kész  ready  készül  become prepared, ready  
sárga  yellow  sárgul  turn yellow  
szép  beautiful  szépül  become beautiful

This suffix may be added to non-adjective stems as well.

alak  form  alakul  take shape  
alap  base  alapul  be founded  
gyógy-8  cure  gyógyul  be cured  
tan  learn  tanul  learn

8 See n. 1 above.
This suffix makes intransitive verbs. Verbs with this suffix often find their transitive counterparts in verbs ending in -szt (see above, section 12.3.4).

- **ébred** wake up  
  **ijed** become frightened

- **fárad** become tired  
  **riad** become alarmed

- **halad** progress, advance  
  **szárad** become dry

This suffix makes intransitive verbs. There is no way to predict whether the suffix will contain a d (–kodik) or a z (–kozik). This suffix has many uses; only a few are listed here.

Often the meaning is reflexive, i.e., to do the activity to oneself. (The reflexive pronouns are never used with these verbs.)

- **fésül** use a comb  
  **fésülködik** comb one’s hair

- **mos** wash  
  **mosakodik** wash oneself

- **öltöz** dress (trans.)  
  **öltözködik** get dressed

- **töröl** wipe  
  **törölközik** dry oneself with a towel

It may be used to identify occupations.

- **lektor** lector  
  **lektorkodik** work as a lector

- **pincér** waiter  
  **pincérkedik** work as a waiter

This suffix may describe a way of behaving.

- **szemtelen** impertinent  
  **szemtelenkedik** misbehave

- **szerelmes** in love  
  **szerelmeskedik** act lovey-dovey

- **szomorú** sad  
  **szomorkodik** act sad
It may be added to other roots to express mutual behavior.

- **barát** friend  **barátkozik** make friends
- **szeret** love  **szeretkezik** make love

**12.3.8 -skodik/-skedik/-sködik**

This suffix makes intransitive verbs. After stems ending in a consonant it requires the linking vowel **o/e/ö**; stems ending in **a** or **e** lengthen to **á** or **é**, respectively. It denotes behaving as the noun or adjective of its root.

- **cimbora** pal  **cimboráskodik** fraternize
- **hülye** idiot(ic)  **hülyéskedik** act stupidly
- **nagylelkű** generous  **nagylelkűsködik** act generously
- **tanú** witness  **tanuskodik** bear witness

**12.3.9 -odik/-edik/-ödik**

This suffix makes intransitive verbs. It is most often attached to adjectives, but is found with other roots as well. Verbs formed with this suffix usually find their transitive counterparts with verbs ending in **-ít**.

- **halvány** obscure, dim  **halványodik** become obscure, fade
- **kanyar** curve  **kanyarodik** bend, curve (as in a road or river)
- **keskeny** narrow  **keskenyedik** become narrow

**12.3.10 -ódik/-ődik**

This suffix makes intransitive verbs. It is often attached to transitive verb stems.

- **befejez** finish  **befejeződik** come to an end, become finished
- **csuk** close, shut  **csukódik** close, shut (by itself)
elvégez finish elvégződik come to an end
kezd begin kezdődik start (intrans.)
zár close, lock záródik close, lock (by itself)

Mikor kezdtek az előadást? When did they start the lecture?
Mikor kezdődött az előadás? When did the lecture start?
Becsukta az ajtót. She closed the door.
Becsukódik az ajtó. The door is closing.

12.3.11 -ll(ik)

This suffix is added to adjectives and expressions of quantity; the verb denotes that something appears to have the quality of the root – sometimes in excess. Stems ending in a consonant require the linking vowel (and other stem alternations) found in forming the adverb. Word-final a and e are lengthened to á and é, respectively.

sok much sokall consider something too much
kevés few kevesell consider something too little, not enough
fekete black feketéllik show, appear black

Kevesellte a fizetést. He thought the pay was too low.

12.3.12 -ászik/-észik

This suffix forms verbs denoting a trade or hobby.

vad wild vadászik hunt
madár bird madarászik hunt birds
sólyom hawk sólymászik hunt hawks
12.4 Diminutives

Diminutives are suffixes added to names, nouns, and sometimes adjectives and denote the smallness of, or fondness toward, a person or object. They are very common in Hungarian; parents almost always use them with the names of their children, and depending on the idiosyncracies of the speaker, they can find their way into many sentences.

Diminutives take several shapes. The most common are given here.

12.4.1 -cska/-cske

This diminutive can be attached to most nouns and some adjectives. After nouns ending in a consonant, it requires the linking vowel used to form the plural; any other stem changes required in the plural are also required when attaching this suffix. Word-final vowels a or e are lengthened to á or é, respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hungarian</th>
<th>Polish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>girl</td>
<td>lány</td>
<td>kocięta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cloud</td>
<td>felhő</td>
<td>chmura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>milk</td>
<td>tej</td>
<td>mleko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fork</td>
<td>villa</td>
<td>kijota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>big</td>
<td>nagy</td>
<td>wielki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>face</td>
<td>arc</td>
<td>twarz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hand</td>
<td>kéz</td>
<td>ręka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>house</td>
<td>ház</td>
<td>domuł</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horse</td>
<td>ló</td>
<td>konik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bird</td>
<td>madár</td>
<td>ptak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.4.2 -ka/-ke

This diminutive is usually attached to polysyllabic words not ending in -k or -g. It attaches directly to the stem and does not require the linking vowel or the stem changes found when forming the plural.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hungarian</th>
<th>Polish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>poor</td>
<td>szegény</td>
<td>biedź</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cow</td>
<td>tehén</td>
<td>bydgoszcz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person</td>
<td>ember</td>
<td>osobę</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small</td>
<td>kicsi</td>
<td>mały</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piece</td>
<td>darab</td>
<td>kawałek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bird</td>
<td>madár</td>
<td>ptak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>table</td>
<td>asztal</td>
<td>stół</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>short</td>
<td>rövid</td>
<td>krótki</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This suffix is used with stems that have already been shortened.

- cigarette cigaretteta cigi
- chocolate csokoládé csoki
- thank you köszönöm köszi

Perhaps the most common use of diminutives is with people’s names. Often the names are shortened and several different diminutives may be attached. A name with front-vowel assonance may change to a nickname with back-vowel assonance and vice versa. The -ka/-ke suffix is the most common with names and the first person singular possessive suffix is often attached. Several common variations with names are given here.

John János: Jani, Janika, Jánoska, Jancsi, Jancsika, Jancsó, Jancsóka
Charles Károly: Károlyka, Karcsi, Karesz
George György: Gyuri, Gyurika
Stephen István: Isti, Istvánka, Pista, Pisti, Pistike, Pityu
Elizabeth Erzsébet: Erzsi, Erzsike, Erzsó, Erzsóka, Zsóka, Böcsi, Bözsike, Böske, Örzsé, Örzse, Örzsike
Mary Mária: Mari, Marika, Maris, Mariska, Marcsi

The first person singular possessive suffix is often attached to diminutives when addressing the person directly.

Erzsikém, gyere ide! Come here, Erzsi!
Úgy szeretlek, Jánoskám. I love you so much, János.

Children (and people speaking with them) commonly use the following diminutives:

- father apa apu, apuka, apus, apuska, api, apika, apuci, papus
- mother anya anyu, anyuka, anyus, anyuska, anyuci
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Hungarian</th>
<th>Diminutives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rabbit</td>
<td>nyúl</td>
<td>nyuszi, nyuszika, nyulacska, nyuszóka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dog</td>
<td>kutya</td>
<td>kutyu, kutyus, kutyuska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cat</td>
<td>macska</td>
<td>cica, cica-mica, cicus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 13

Conjunctions

13.1 Coordinating conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions join clauses, phrases or words. A comma is usually used before conjunctions joining clauses. The following are the most important coordinating conjunctions in Hungarian.

13.1.1 Connecting conjunctions

These may be single words or pairs of words:

és ‘and’

Imre és János most vacsorázik. Imre and János are eating dinner now.

Esik az eső és fúj a szél. It’s raining and the wind is blowing.

s ‘and’ (pronounced as one with the following syllable):

Megjött a levél, s rögtön elolvasta. The letter arrived and he read it immediately.

Zsófia s én együtt dolgozunk. Zsófia and I work together.

meg ‘and’ (when joining clauses, meg is usually in the second position of the clause):

Péter moziba megy, én meg színházba megyek. Péter is going to the movies and I am going to the theater.

Kettő meg kettő, az négy. Two and two are four.
is ‘too’, ‘also’ (this word always follows the phrase to which it refers):

**Nekünk van kutyánk, macskánk is.**
We have a dog and a cat (too).

se, sem ‘neither’, ‘nor’

**Nekem nem ízlett a bor, (s) Jánosnak sem.**
I didn’t like the wine, and neither did János.

sőt ‘moreover’, ‘indeed’, ‘even’

**Nagy tetszik a húgod, sőt, meghívtam vacsorára.**
I really like your sister, I even invited her to dinner.

is . . is ‘both . . and’

**Apám is, anyám is Budapesten lakik.**
Both my father and mother live in Budapest.

mind . . mind ‘both . . and’

**Mind a gyerekek, mind a felnőttek szerették azt a játékok.**
Both the children and the adults loved that game.

sem . . sem, se . . se ‘neither . . nor’

**Sem kalapot, sem kesztyűt nem hord télen.**
He wears neither a hat nor gloves in the winter.

**Mi történt veled? Se nem írsz, se nem telefonálsz.**
What is up with you? You neither write nor call me.

nemcsak . . hanem . . is ‘not just . . but . . too’

**Nemcsak főz a férjem, hanem porszívóz is!**
My husband doesn’t just cook, he vacuums too!

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**13.1.2 Contrasting conjunctions**

de ‘but’

**Meghívtam a bátyámat, de nem tud eljönni.**
I invited my brother, but he is unable to come.
hanem ‘but’, ‘rather’ (Always preceded by a nem-clause.)

Nem Prágába akar menni, hanem Bécsbe.
She doesn’t want to go to Prague, rather to Vienna.

mégis ‘(but) still’, ‘even so’

Az előadás unalmas volt, mégis tanultam valamit belőle.
The lecture was boring, but I still learned something from it.

mégsem ‘(but) still . . . not’

Rengeteg eszik, mégsem hízik.
He eats so much, but still he doesn’t put on weight.

azonban ‘however’, ‘but’ (This word is usually in the second position of the clause.)

Hazavittem a számítógépet, a könyveimet azonban az irodában hagytam.
I brought my computer home, but I left my books in the office.

ellenben ‘on the other hand’

A bátyám nagyon gazdag, ellenben az öcsém elég szegény.
My older brother is very rich, my younger brother on the other hand is rather poor.

viszont ‘but, on the other hand’

Imádom a nyarat, viszont a telet egyáltalán nem bírom.
I love summer, but I can’t stand winter at all.

13.1.3 Conjunctions of choice

vagy ‘or’

Eljössz velem, vagy itthon maradsz?
Are you coming with me or staying home?

vagy . . . vagy ‘either . . . or’ (Used when the choice between two options results in two different outcomes.)

Ma este vagy moziba megyünk, vagy színházba.
We are either going to the movies or to the theater tonight.
akár . . . akár ‘whether . . . or’ (Used when the choice between two options results in the same outcome.)

Akár hiszed, akár nem, a hatéves fiam már tud síelni.
Whether you believe it or not, my six-year-old son already knows how to ski.

13.1.5 Explanatory conjunctions

These conjunctions are used to explain or account for the assertion in the preceding clause.

ugyanis ‘for’, ‘since’, ‘because’

A felesége jól beszél magyarul, ugyanis egy évig Budapesten élt.
His wife speaks Hungarian well, for she lived in Budapest for a year.

hiszen ‘for’, ‘since’, ‘because’

Nagyon berúgott, hiszen egymaga megivott egy egész üveg bort.
He got very drunk, for he drank a whole bottle of wine by himself.

tudniillik ‘because’, ‘since’

Nem tudom olvasni az újságot, tudniillik nem találom a szemüvegemet.
I can’t read the newspaper, because I can’t find my glasses.

The explanatory conjunctions azaz and vagyis provide a more detailed explanation of the preceding phrase or assertion.

azaz ‘that is to say’

A pincér szorgalmasan dolgozott, azaz nem csak áldogált a konyhában.
The waiter worked hard, that is to say, he did not just hang about the kitchen.

vagyis ‘in other words’

A betegnek ágyban kell maradnia, vagyis nem szabad sokat mozognia.
The patient must stay in bed, in other words, he must not move around much.
**13.1.6 Concluding conjunctions**

These conjunctions suggest the consequence of the preceding phrase.

**ezért** ‘for this reason’, ‘this is why’

*Későn érkeztem haza, ezért nem hívtalak fel.*
I came home late, that’s why I didn’t call you.

**tehát** ‘therefore’, ‘thus’

*Gondolkodom, tehát vagyok.*
I think, therefore I am.

**ennélfogva** ‘consequently’, ‘thus’

*Egész nap csak énekeltem, ennélfogva tönkretette a hangját.*
She sang the whole day, consequently she ruined her voice.

**13.2 Subordinating conjunctions**

**hogy** ‘that’ (used to introduce an imbedded sentence)

*Tudod, hogy holnaptól megyek szabadságra?*
Do you know that my vacation begins tomorrow?

*Érted, hogy mit mondok?*
Do you understand what I am saying?

**mint** ‘as’ (used in clauses of comparison)

*A szeme olyan zöld, mint a smaragd.*
His eyes are as green as emeralds.

*Úgy fut, mint a nyúl.*
She runs like a rabbit.

**ha** ‘if’, ‘when’

*Ha Budapesten vagy, mindenképpen keress fel!*
When you are in Budapest, by all means look me up.

*Ha több időm lenne, zongorázni tanulnék.*
If I had more time I would learn to play the piano.

**mintha** ‘as if’, ‘as though’ (usually followed by the conditional form of the verb)
Úgy tesz, mintha boldog lenne.
She acts as though she is happy.

hacsak ‘if only’

Hacsak tehetem, ott leszek a bulin.
I’ll be at the party if I possibly can.

(a)mikor ‘when’

Éppen leültünk, mikor megszólalt a telefon.
We had just sat down when the phone rang.

miután ‘after’

Miután megfürdetem a lányomat, egyszerre leteszem aludni.
After I bathe my daughter, I’ll put her to bed.

mielőtt ‘before’

Mielőtt hazamentek, megisztok egy kávét?
Will you have a cup of coffee before you go home?

(a)mióta ‘since’

Amióta megnősült, sokkal vidámabb.
He is a lot more cheerful since he got married.

bár ‘although’

Nem írtam a barátaimnak, bár gyakran gondoltam rájuk.
I didn’t write my friends, though I thought of them often.

mert ‘because’

Nem mentek el kirándulni, mert esni kezdett az eső.
They didn’t go on the outing because it started to rain.

mivel ‘because’, ‘since’

A lépcsőn kellett felmenniük, mivel rossz a lift.
Since the elevator is not working, they had to take the stairs.

13.2.1 -e ‘whether’

The particle -e is placed on the verb of the subordinate (‘whether’) clause (if the sentence contains no verb the particle is placed on the nominal
predicate). In Hungarian, the ‘whether’ and ‘if’ clauses are not interchangeable: if, in the English sentence, ‘whether’ can substitute for ‘if’, use only the ‘whether’ construction in Hungarian.

Nem tudjuk, hogy Pál eljön-e.
We don’t know whether (if) Pál is coming.

Kíváncsi vagyok, hogy drága-e az étterem.
I wonder whether (if) the restaurant is expensive.

### 13.2.2 Relative pronouns

Subordinate clauses may be introduced by relative pronouns. These are formed in Hungarian simply by prefixing a- to an interrogative pronoun.

Ismered a lányt, aki a másik asztalnál ül?
Do you know the girl who is sitting at the other table?

Nem értem az elméletet, amiről beszélnek.
I don’t understand the theory they are talking about.

Úgy készíti a rétest, ahogy a nagyanyám.
She makes strudel just as my grandmother does.
### 14.1 Cardinal and ordinal numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cardinal</th>
<th>Ordinal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>nulla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>egy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>kettő (két)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>három</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>négy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>öt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>hét</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>nyolc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>kilenc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>tíz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>tizenegy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>tizenkettő</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13, etc.</td>
<td>tizenhárom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>húsz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21, etc.</td>
<td>huszonegy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>harminc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31, etc.</td>
<td>harmincegy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Numeral | Singular | Possessive
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>negyven</td>
<td>negyvenedik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41, etc.</td>
<td>negyvenegy</td>
<td>negyvenegyedik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>ötven</td>
<td>ötvenedik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51, etc.</td>
<td>ötvenegy</td>
<td>ötvenegyedik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>hatvan</td>
<td>hatvanadik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61, etc.</td>
<td>hatvanegy</td>
<td>hatvanegyedik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>hetven</td>
<td>hetvenedik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71, etc.</td>
<td>hetvenegy</td>
<td>hetvenegyedik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>nyolcvan</td>
<td>nyolvanadik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81, etc.</td>
<td>nyolvanegy</td>
<td>nyolvanegyedik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>kilencven</td>
<td>kilencvenedik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91, etc.</td>
<td>kilencvenegy</td>
<td>kilencvenegyedik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>száz</td>
<td>századik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>százegy</td>
<td>százegyedik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>kétszáz</td>
<td>kétszázadik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>ezer</td>
<td>ezredik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>ezeregyszáz</td>
<td>ezeregyszázadik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>kétezer</td>
<td>kétezredik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>tízezer</td>
<td>tízezredik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>százezer</td>
<td>százezredik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>(egy)millió</td>
<td>(egy)milliomodik</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**14.1.1**

Hungarian uses the singular after all numbers or expressions of quantity:

**Két bátyám van.**
I have two brothers.

**Körübelül háromezer diák tanul ezen az egyetemen.**
Approximately three thousand students are at this university.
The number two – or any number ending in two – kettő uses the shorter form két when preceding nouns.

Két kocsi van a ház előtt. Two cars are in front of the house.


The long form may also be used before nouns to avoid a possible misunderstanding with the word hét.

Kettőszáz forintba kerül. It costs two hundred forints.

### 14.2 Declension of numerals

#### 14.2.1

The accusative of cardinal numbers is irregular (the plural is rare, but formed along the same pattern):

- egyet
- négyet
- hetet
- tizet
- negyvenet
- hetvenet
- százat
- kettőt
- ötöt
- nyolcat
- húszat
- ötvenet
- nyolcvenat
- ezret
- hármat
- hatot
- kilencvenet
- harmincat
- hatvanat
- kilencvenet
- milliót

Csak egyet kérünk. We would like just one (of them).

Ezret láttam. I saw a thousand (of them).

Ezreket láttam. I saw thousands (of them).

#### 14.2.2

The accusative of the ordinal numbers requires the low linking vowel a/e before the -t:\(^1\)

- harmadikat
- negyediket

---

\(^1\) Except első: (acc.) elsőt; (third person poss.) elseje.
The rest of the declension is regular.²

The possessive third person singular possessive suffix (used in dates) is formed with a/e:³

- **február huszonkettedike**  
  February 22
- **május tizenhatodika**  
  May 16
- **Hányadika van ma?**  
  What is today’s date?

### 14.3 Adverbial use of expressions of quantity

If the subject of a sentence is *a number of people*, the adverbial form of the number or other expression of quantity is often used. The verb must be in the plural and the word *ember* is omitted. Often it is only the verb conjugation that indicates the subject.

- **ketten**  
  ketten
- **hatan**  
  hatan
- **tízen**  
  tízen
- **negyvenen**  
  negyvenen
- **kevesen**  
  kevesen
- **hárman**  
  hármán
- **heten**  
  heten
- **tizenegyen**  
  tizenegyen
- **százan**  
  százan
- **hányan**  
  hányan
- **négyen**  
  négyen
- **nyolcan**  
  nyolcan
- **húszan**  
  húszan
- **ezren**  
  ezren
- **többen**  
  többen
- **öten**  
  öten
- **kilencen**  
  kilencen
- **harmincan**  
  harmincan
- **sokan**  
  sokan
- **ezreken**  
  ezreken

**Ketten mentünk moziba.**  
The two of us went to the movies.

**Többen jöttek, mint múltkor.**  
More people came than last time.

**Hányan maradtok itt?**  
How many of you are staying here?

**Sokan voltunk az előadáson.**  
Many of us were at the lecture.

**Tízen várta a sorban.**  
Ten people were waiting in line.

---

² The word három ‘three’ declines as a fleeting vowel sound.
³ See n. 1 above.
Fractions

Fractions are easily formed from the ordinal numbers by removing the last letters -ik. The word fél (or egyketted) ‘half’ is an exception.

\[
\begin{align*}
\frac{1}{3} &\quad \text{egyharmad} \\
\frac{2}{6} &\quad \text{kéthatod} \\
\frac{4}{9} &\quad \text{négykilenced}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\frac{1}{4} &\quad \text{egynegyed} \\
\frac{2}{7} &\quad \text{kétheted} \\
\frac{1}{5} &\quad \text{egyötöd} \\
\frac{2}{8} &\quad \text{kétnyolcad}
\end{align*}
\]

The accusative is formed by adding the vowel o/e/ö before -t (fél ‘half’ loses vowel length: felet).

**Csak egyötödöt kérek szépen.** I would like only one fifth, please.

The third person singular possessive is formed with or without the j (unless used in dates, when it is always formed without the j):

- **harmada ~ harmadja** one third (of it)
- **negyede ~ negyedje** one fourth (of it)

Also in use:

- **másfél** 1½

Decimals

Decimals are marked with a comma in Hungarian; the presence of a decimal may be articulated by the word egész ‘whole’.
Nouns and adjectives derived from numbers

Numbers are used to indicate tram, bus, metro or lines, addresses, banknotes, etc. When referring to something by its number, use the derivational ending -s. With the exception of kettő ‘two’ the numbers add this derivational ending exactly as though adding an accusative ending:

egyes  kettes  hármas
négyes  ötös  hatos
hetes  nyolcas  kilences
tizes  tizenegyes  huszas
harmincas  negyvenes  százas
ezres  hányas

Fel kell szállnom a négyes villamosra.
I have to board the number 4 tram.

Tudsz adni egy százast?
Can you give me a 100 forint/dollar note?

Zsuzsa az 512-es (ötszáztizenkettes) szobában dolgozik.
Zsuzsa works in room 512.

Hányas a cipőd?
What size (lit. number) are your shoes?

Multiplicative -szor/-zer/-ször

This suffix is added to numbers, fractions and other expressions of quantity to mean ‘time(s)’.
Csak egyszer voltam Londonban.
I've only been to London once.

Most már ötödször olvasom ezt a könyvet.
I'm reading this book for the fifth time.

Hányszor láttad már a kedvenc filmedet?
How many times have you seen your favorite movie?

Milliószor csókollak.
I kiss you a million times.

14.7.2

This suffix is used to multiply numbers.

Háromszor négy az tizenkettő.
Three times four is twelve.

Kétszer kettő az négy.
Two times two is four.
Chapter 15

Interjections

Interjections are isolated words or phrases outside the rules of grammar. They may express joy, fear, frustration, pain, etc. The following are some common interjections in Hungarian:

- **Csitt!**  
  Sshhh!

- **Ejnye, ejnye!**  
  Tsk, tsk!

- **Ejnye-bejnye!**  
  Tsk, tsk!

- **Ez az.**  
  That’s it.

- **Hát ...**  
  Well ...

- **Hurrá!**  
  Hurray!

- **Hű-ha!**  
  Uh-oh.

- **Íme**  
  Behold, voilà!

- **Isten őrizz!**  
  God forbid!

- **Így van.**  
  Right, that’s the way it is.

- **Ja?**  
  Really/Is that so?

- **Jaj, istenem!**  
  Oh my God!

- **Jaj-jaj**  
  Oh, no!/Oh, dear.

- **Jézus, Mária**  
  Jesus and Mary!

- **Kár.**  
  It’s a shame.

- **Lám.**  
  There we go.

- **Na!**  
  Well!

- **Naná.**  
  You see? (I told you so.)
Nini! Look! (children’s word)
Nos . . . Well . . .
Nosza . . . Well . . .
Pfuj! Yuck!
Tyű! Wow!
PART III

Sentence structure
Chapter 16

Sentence elements and word order

Word order in Hungarian is quite different from English in a number of ways. In English, it is the word order of sentences that tells us what the subject and object are. For example in the sentence, ‘The dog chased the postman’, we know the subject is ‘the dog’. In ‘The postman chased the dog’ we know the subject is ‘the postman’. Though both sentences contain the same words, because of the difference in word order, the meanings of the two are entirely different – particularly from the postman’s point of view!

Before examining the differences from English in Hungarian word order, the similarities should be clear. The subject–verb–object word order found in English is very common in Hungarian too, especially when the object is preceded by an article:

Mária szereti az anyját.  Mária loves her mother.
(subject–verb–object)

Lajos ír egy levelet.  Lajos is writing a letter.
(subject–verb–object)

The above Hungarian sentences, however, may be written in a variety of word orders and would have English equivalents requiring either a change in intonation or a different expression altogether. The following Hungarian sentences have the possible English equivalents given (among others).

Szereti Mária az anyját.  Mária loves her mother.

Mária az anyját szereti.  Mária loves her mother.

In Hungarian, the extensive case system clearly marks the grammatical function, i.e., part of speech, of nouns or noun-phrases. Because subjects and objects are easily distinguished by their case markings, Hungarian need not rely on word order to determine grammatical function. Therefore, Hungarian allows a freedom of word order unknown in English. This,
however, does not mean that Hungarian word order is free; word order is used instead as a means of backgrounding and/or highlighting information. ‘Topic-comment structure’ is the term generally applied to Hungarian word order. By this it is meant that topics, i.e., previously known or background information, begin the sentence; the ‘comment’ (or new information) follows. In this way topics set the communicative stage for the essential points of discourse. In Hungarian, the topic typically includes subjects, general time expressions or reference to previously mentioned material.

Two main sentence types are pertinent for Hungarian in the discussion of word order; although both retain the topic-comment structure, word order restrictions are different for each type. The first type is the ‘neutral sentence’, the second is traditionally referred to as the ‘focus’ type. Both require an understanding of sentence positions; their characteristics are outlined below.

16.1 Sentence positions

To see how Hungarian word order works in neutral or focussed sentences, it is helpful to establish the following sentence positions:

\[
\text{Topic} \quad || \quad \text{Neutral Preverb} \quad || \quad \text{Verb} \quad || \quad \text{X} \\
\quad || \quad \sim\text{Focus Preverb} \quad ||
\]

16.1.1 Topic

The topic position is in the beginning of the sentence and is usually filled with subject(s), general time expressions, previously referred to expressions (i.e., known information) and/or any other information which serves to set the background for more essential information to come. It may contain several constituents or remain empty.

16.1.2 Preverb

The preverb occupies the position immediately before the conjugated verb. The preverb is the crux of the sentence for it is primarily here that the grammaticality of a sentence is determined. It is filled by different elements
of speech depending on whether the sentence is neutral or focussed. Although the preverb position may be empty, it is rarely filled by more than one constituent.

### 16.1.2.1 Neutral preverb

In neutral sentences the preverb position is filled by

(a) a coverb (be, ki, le, fel, el, meg, etc.),
(b) an adverb or adverbial phrase (jól, itt, a házban, etc.) or
(c) a verbal complement. See section 16.2 for a full description of verbal complements.

### 16.1.2.2 Focus preverb

Focus is a category in Hungarian that consists of

(a) question words or phrases,
(b) answers to questions,
(c) negation or negated phrases,
(d) stressed words or phrases.

When a focussed element is introduced in a sentence it must occupy the focus preverb position. As a consequence of this, any element which would occupy the preverb position in a neutral sentence is removed to a position immediately behind the conjugated verb. Thus it may be helpful to think of the focussed element as ‘kicking out’ the neutral preverb element. The topic position is unaffected by focus; it remains the communicative backdrop of the sentence.

### 16.1.3 Verb

This is the position for the conjugated verb; other verbal forms (infinitives, participles, etc.) are found elsewhere in the sentence. In neutral sentences, if the verb is prefixed with a coverb, the coverb occupies the preverb position.
16.1.4 X

This position is filled by any part of speech (except the conjugated verb); it may contain several constituents; it may be empty. For the most part, the constituents may occur in the X position in any order without a difference in meaning. In sentences with focus, however, it is usual that the first element of X is the element that was removed from the neutral preverb position. (The initial position of X is identical with the position immediately following the verb.)

16.1.5 A note on grammaticality

Broadly speaking, the well-formedness of a sentence depends on how the position immediately preceding the conjugated verb is filled; the sentence is ungrammatical if the preverb position is incorrectly filled. The topic and X positions have less to do with grammaticality and more to do with the logical flow or presentation of information; thus they exhibit a greater freedom of word order. The word order of the preverb and verb positions is fixed.

16.2 Verbal complements

Verbal complements may be any part of speech, but they are characteristicistically what might be considered a ‘natural’ complement to the verb.

16.2.1

The verbal complement may be the predicate nominative or predicate adjective.

Én mérnök vagyok. I am an engineer.

Magasak vagytok. You (pl.) are tall.

16.2.2

In there is/there are constructions, the verbal complement is the subject.
In ‘have’ constructions, the verbal complement is what one has (the grammatical subject):

Nekem két testvérem van.   I have two siblings.
Lacinak kevés ideje van.   Laci has little time.

The verbal complement is often the direct object:

Dénes könyvet olvas.   Dénes is reading a book.

This sentence has the more literal, though clumsy, English translation ‘Dénes is book-reading’. The complement of the verb is the direct object könyvet ‘book’. This is a common sentence type in Hungarian which conveys the idea that a generic activity is taking place with no reference to specifics, i.e., in this case no individual book is mentioned. In Hungarian this sentence structure can be applied to many activities, as long as the verbal complement is not individuated. In English only a limited number of idiomatic constructions of this type occur (some examples would include babysitting, apartment-hunting, people-watching).

More examples of direct object verbal complements include:

Apám újságot vesz.   My father is buying a newspaper.
Tévét nézek.   I am watching television.
János tollat keres.   János is looking for a pen.

Verbal complements may also be adverbials:

Moziba megyünk.   We are going to the movies.
Színházba mennek.  They are going to the theater.
Erzsi egyetemre jár.
Erzsi attends college.

A Kovácsék vidéken laknak.
The Kovácses live in the countryside.

Whatever part of speech occupies the preverb position – whether it is a subject, object or adverbial – it is typically not preceded by an article –
definite or indefinite.\(^1\)

### 16.3 Neutral sentence structure

Neutral sentences have a level intonation pattern; they are further characterized by *not* containing elements with heavy stress or emphasis,
interrogatives, answers or negation.

With the sentence positions established as above, we may consider the word order of the following sentences:

1. **Attila itt van.**
   Attila is here.
2. **Klára szépen énekel.**
   Klára sings beautifully.
3. **Az orvos megvizsgálja a beteget.**
   The doctor will examine the patient.
4. **Megvizsgálja az orvos a beteget.**
   The doctor will examine the patient.
5. **Múlt évben a szülei Budapesten laktak.**
   Last year his parents lived in Budapest.
6. **Múlt évben Budapesten laktak a szülei.**
   Last year his parents lived in Budapest.
7. **Dénes könyvet olvas a nappaliban.**
   Dénes is reading a book in the living room.
8. **Reggel a gyerekek a kertben játszanak.**
   In the morning the children play in the yard.
9. **Reggel a kertben játszanak a gyerekek.**
   In the morning the children play in the yard.

---

\(^1\) The indefinite article, however, may be used and the same word order maintained (in this case, the verbal complement not a generic, but an individuated one):

- **Apám egy újságot vesz.** My father is buying a newspaper.
- **János egy tollat keres.** János is looking for a pen.
10  **Zsuzsa el akar utazni Prágába.**
Zsuzsa wants to travel to Prague.

11  **Amerikaiak vagyunk.**
We are American.

12  **Péter jól megtanulta a leckét.**
Péter learned the lesson well.

The above sentences are categorized according to sentence position in the following table. Topic position is filled by subjects and/or time expressions or remains empty. The preverb position is filled with adverbs or adverbials of place (sentences 1, 5, 6, 8, 9), adverbs of manner (sentences 2, 12), verbal complements (sentences 7, 11, 12) or coverbs (sentences 3, 4, 10). Sentence 12 illustrates the word order for the preverb position containing two elements. The coverb is usually not separated from the verb in these instances. (But see focus structure below.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Neutral preverb</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Attila</td>
<td>itt</td>
<td>van.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Klára</td>
<td>szépen</td>
<td>énekel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Az orvos</td>
<td>meg-</td>
<td>vizsgálja a beteget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Meg-</td>
<td>vizsgálja</td>
<td>az orvos a beteget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Múlt évben a szülei</td>
<td>Budapesten</td>
<td>laktak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Múlt évben</td>
<td>Budapesten</td>
<td>laktak a szülei.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dénes</td>
<td>könyvet</td>
<td>olvas a nappaliban.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Reggel a gyerekek</td>
<td>a kertben</td>
<td>játszanak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Reggel</td>
<td>a kertben</td>
<td>játszanak a gyerekek.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Zsuzsa</td>
<td>el</td>
<td>akar utazni Prágába.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Amerikaiak</td>
<td>vagyunk.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Péter</td>
<td>jól megtanulta</td>
<td>a leckét.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 See section 16.4 for more on this sentence type.
16.4 Sentence structure with focus elements

Focussed sentences have an intonation pattern containing the main (often heavy) stress on the focussed element. Focus affects the word order of neutral sentences by usurping the preverb position for itself and removing the neutral preverb element to a position immediately behind the verb. The topic position remains unaffected.

Focussed sentences contain interrogatives, answers, negation or emphasis (stressed words or phrases).

Consider the following sentences with focus elements. These are all permutations of the neutral sentence (5) Dénes könyvet olvas. Dénes is reading a book.

13 **Ki olvas könyvet?** *(Contains a question word)*
   Who is reading a book?

14 **Dénes olvas könyvet.** *(As answer to the previous sentence, Dénes is the answer, the focussed element)*
   Dénes is reading a book.

15 **Dénes nem olvas könyvet.** *(Contains negation)*
   Dénes is not reading a book.

16 **Csak Dénes olvas könyvet.** *(Contains a stressed element – the csak-phrase.)*
   Only Dénes is reading a book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Focus preverb</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ki</td>
<td>olvas</td>
<td>könyvet?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dénes</td>
<td>olvas</td>
<td>könyvet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dénes</td>
<td>nem</td>
<td>olvas</td>
<td>könyvet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Csak Dénes</td>
<td>olvas</td>
<td>könyvet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table illustrates the permutations of word order for focussed elements in a sentence. In sentence (13), although Ki ‘who’ is the sentence subject, Dénes need not begin the sentence, but it must be in the focus preverb position.

---

3 The answer Dénes need not begin the sentence, but it must be in the focus preverb position.
it is found in focus position because it is a question word. In sentence (14), Dénes, though it is the subject, is the answer to the question Ki? of the previous sentence, and therefore is found in the focus position. Negation occupies the focus position in sentence (15). Emphatic or stressed phrases (as illustrated here by the phrase beginning with csak ‘only’) are found in focus position. In all four sentences the focus position has usurped the preverb position of neutral sentences. The word könyvet ‘book, acc.’, which had occupied the preverb position in the neutral sentence (5), has consequently been removed to a position immediately behind the verb.

To further examine the possibilities of word order, consider again sentence (8):

Reggel a gyerekek a kertben játszanak.
In the morning the children play in the yard.

We may rephrase the sentence as a question ‘Where do the children play in the morning?’ In Hungarian it is most common to begin questions with the interrogative, but there is nonetheless a flexibility of word order which depends on how the speaker wishes to frame the question. The only firm requirement is that the interrogative hol ‘where’ be immediately before the conjugated verb. The topic position may be filled or empty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Where do the children play in the morning?’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reggel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A gyerekek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reggel a gyerekek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A gyerekek reggel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, other sentences with focussed elements relative to sentence (8) include questions such as ‘who?, when? what do the children do in the morning?’ Naturally, answers can be offered as well. The sentence – or
certain elements of the sentence – can be negated (i.e., it is *not the children who* play in the yard . . .). Finally, any part of the sentence can be stressed for communicative need. (It is easiest for our purposes here to demonstrate stress by creating a *csak*-phrase – always inherently stressed in Hungarian.) The following table illustrates the word order possibilities for such focussed sentences. Note the free variation of word order in the Topic and X positions and the fixed word order of the focus and verb positions.

17 **Reggel kik játszanak a kertben?**
Who plays in the garden in the morning?

18 **Reggel a gyerekek játszanak a kertben.** (answer to (1))
The children play in the garden in the morning.

19a **A gyerekek mikor játszanak a kertben?**
When do the children play in the garden?

19b **Mikor játszanak a kertben a gyerekek?**
When do the children play in the garden?

20 **A gyerekek reggel játszanak a kertben.** (answer to (19a, b))
The children play in the garden in the morning.

21 **A gyerekek sohasem játszanak a kertben reggel.**
The children never play in the garden in the morning.

22 **A gyerekek nem reggel játszanak a kertben, hanem délután.**
The children don’t play in the garden in the morning, rather in the afternoon.

23 **A gyerekek csak reggel játszanak a kertben, este soha.**
It is only in the morning that the children play in the garden, never in the evening.

24 **Reggel a gyerekek csak a kertben játszanak, a házban soha.**
The children play only in the garden, never in the house.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of focus</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Reggel</td>
<td>kik</td>
<td>játszanak</td>
<td>a kertben?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer</td>
<td>Reggel</td>
<td>a gyerekek</td>
<td>játszanak</td>
<td>a kertben.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>A gyerekek</td>
<td>mikor</td>
<td>játszanak</td>
<td>a kertben?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Mikor</td>
<td>játszanak</td>
<td>a kertben a gyerekek?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer</td>
<td>A gyerekek</td>
<td>reggel</td>
<td>játszanak</td>
<td>a kertben.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of focus</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Negation</td>
<td>A gyerekek</td>
<td>sohasem</td>
<td>játszanak a kertben</td>
<td>reggel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Negation</td>
<td>A gyerekek</td>
<td>nem reggel</td>
<td>játszanak a kertben, hanem</td>
<td>délután.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Stress</td>
<td>A gyerekek</td>
<td>csak reggel</td>
<td>játszanak a kertben, este</td>
<td>soha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Stress</td>
<td>Reggel a gyerekek</td>
<td>csak a</td>
<td>játszanak, kertben a házban</td>
<td>soha.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above sentences the neutral preverb position of (8) a kertben has been ‘kicked out’ to a position immediately behind the verb by each element of focus – a position which coincides with the beginning of X. Note that this is not an exhaustive list of possible permutations. The topic position is filled according to context and previously mentioned material; often in natural dialogue, only one-word answers are given and questions usually begin with the question word.

### 16.4.1 More on focus

#### 16.4.1.1 Questions

Yes–no questions are characterized by not having a question word in them. In this instance the word or phrase being questioned is in the focus position. This may be any part of speech. If it is the verb, the coverb is in the focus position. It is often difficult for English speakers to determine what is specifically being questioned. See section 2.7.3 for intonation patterns of yes–no questions.
16.4.1.2 Questions and negation

If a sentence contains both a question word and negation, they both occur in the focus preverb position; the question word precedes the negation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who doesn’t want coffee?</td>
<td>Ki nem</td>
<td>kér</td>
<td>kábbéli?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why doesn’t Péter want to dance?</td>
<td>Péter</td>
<td>miért nem</td>
<td>akar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whom didn’t you invite to the party?</td>
<td>Kit nem</td>
<td>hívtál</td>
<td>meghívta buliá?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16.4.1.3 Imperatives

An imperative sentence usually begins with the conjugated imperative verb followed by the coverb.

**Vedd meg azt az inget!** Buy that shirt!

**Gyertek ide!** Come here!

If the imperative is negated, the negation fills the focus position.

**Ne menjetek el nélkülem!** Don’t go without me!

**Ne csukd be az ajtót!** Don’t close the door!
See the Subjunctive section 4.3.6 for further discussion on possible word orders.

### 16.5 Word order of the quasi-auxiliary verbs: kell, akar, tud, lehet, szokott, tetszik, fog

The verbs *kell* ‘be necessary’, *akar* ‘want’, *tud* ‘know how, can, be able’, *lehet* ‘be possible’, *szokott* ‘used to, usually’, *tetszik* ‘be pleasing’, *fog* ‘will (future)’ often occur in constructions with a second verb in the infinitive. When they do, they require that the preverb position be filled. In such sentences, the quasi-auxiliary is the conjugated verb (accordingly it occupies the verb position) and the preverb position is filled with the verbal complement or modifier of the infinitive – not of the conjugated verb (16.5.1–2). If the infinitive has no verbal complement/modifier, then it fills the preverb position itself (16.5.3).

#### 16.5.1

Although the quasi-auxiliary verbs do not have coverbs, the coverb of the infinitive with which they occur fills the preverb position, thus separating itself from the infinitive.

*Le tetszik szállni az autóbuszról?* (leszáll)  
Are you getting off the bus?

*Be tudod fejezni a munkát?* (befejez)  
Can you finish the work?

*Fel fog hívni holnap.* (felhív)  
He will call me tomorrow.

*Fel kell mennem Pestre.* (felmegy)  
I have to go up to Budapest.

*El szokott aludni a vonaton.* (elalszik)  
He usually falls asleep on the train.

---

4 In addition to their use as auxiliary verbs, these verbs may also stand alone – hence, the term ‘quasi-auxiliary’.
If the infinitive of the verb does not have a coverb, its modifying adverb, adverbial or verbal complement fills the preverb position of the quasi-auxiliary verb.

\[
\text{A diákoknak sokat kell olvasniuk.} \quad (< \text{sokat olvas})
\]
The students must read a lot.

\[
\text{Anita levelet akar írni.} \quad (< \text{levelet ír})
\]
Anita wants to write a letter.

\[
\text{Gyula Pécsen fog lakni.} \quad (< \text{Pécsen lakik})
\]
Gyula will live in Pécs.

If the infinitive has neither a coverb, modifying adverb, adverbial or verbal complement, the infinitive itself occupies the preverb position.

\[
\text{Márta aludni akar.} \quad \text{Márta wants to sleep.}
\]
\[
\text{Reggel mosni szokott.} \quad \text{In the morning he usually does the laundry.}
\]
\[
\text{Nekünk tanulnunk kell.} \quad \text{We have to study.}
\]
\[
\text{Este zongorázni lehet.} \quad \text{At night you (one) may play the piano.}
\]

In non-neutral sentences, the focus element must occupy the focus position immediately before the conjugated verb; in this case the modifier of the infinitive (coverb, adverb, etc.) precedes the infinitive.

\[
\text{Neutral: Le tetszik szállni az autóbuszról?}
\]
Are you getting off the bus?

\[
\text{Focus: Nem tetszik leszállni az autóbuszról?}
\]
Aren’t you getting off the bus?
More verbs that often follow the word order patterns of quasi-auxiliaries:

- **bír** can, manage to
- **próbál** try
- **kezd** begin
- **szándékozik** wish
- **kíván** wish
- **szeretne** would like
- **mer** dare
- **talál** happen to
- **óhajt** desire
17.1 Usage of van ‘be’

17.1.1 Present tense

In the present tense van ‘be’ is used in the third person (singular and plural) only in sentences containing existential (i.e., there is/there are) constructions or adverbial complements. Otherwise predicate nouns and adjectives do not occur with the verb van/vannak. Compare the following:

Attila itt van./Attila jól van. (adverbial complement)
Attila is here./Attila is well.

Attila gazdag/tanár. (predicate adjective/noun)
Attila is rich/a teacher.

Van Isten? (existential construction)
Is there a God?

Régi könyvek vannak a szekrényben. (existential construction)
There are old books in the closet.

A könyvek régiek. (predicate adjective)
The books are old.

The first and second persons (singular and plural) always use the verb van ‘be’ (in its correctly conjugated form, of course).

Angol tanár/vidám vagyok. (predicate adjective/noun)
I am an English teacher/cheerful.

Jól vagyok, köszönöm. (adverbial complement)
I’m well, thank you.
Magyarok vagyunk. (predicate adjective/noun)
We are Hungarian(s).

Egy gyönyörű kertben vagyunk. (adverbial complement)
We are in a beautiful garden.

Szép vagy. (predicate adjective/noun)
You are beautiful.

Rosszul vagy? (adverbial complement)
Are you ill?

17.1.2 Past tense

Usage in the past tense is regular: the verb is used in all persons whether it is an adverbial construction or not. The past tense stem of van is volt. The verb lesz ‘will be, become’ has the stem lett in the past tense and means ‘became’.

Attila tanár volt, de most fogorvos.
Attila was a teacher, but now he is a dentist.

Meleg lett./Meleg volt.
It got hot. /It was hot.

17.1.3 Subjunctive/imperative

The subjunctive/imperative is formed from the lesz ‘will be, become’ variant and is used in all persons.

Legyél pontos! Be on time.

Apám akarja, hogy mérnök legyek. My father wants me to be an engineer.

17.1.4 Conditional

The conditional may be formed from either the volna- or lenne- stem; the latter is somewhat more common.

Bárcsak itt lenne! If only she were here.

Bárcsak itt volna! If only she were here.
17.1.5 Future

The verb lesz ‘will be’ is the future form of van ‘be’. It is used in place of the future fog construction. It is not used as an auxiliary verb.

**Mikor lesz már jó idő?** When will there be some good weather?

**Remélem, hogy boldog leszel.** I hope you will be happy.

17.2 Negation and van ‘be’

The negation of van is nincs/nincsen; the negation of vannak is nincsenek.

**Attila nincs itt./Attila nincs jól./Attila nincs a házban.**
Attila is not here./Attila is not well./Attila is not in the house.

**Nincsenek régi könyvek a szekrényben.**
There are no old books in the closet.

In all other cases the negation of verbs (or nominal and adjectival predicates) is nem.

**Attila nem gazdag./Attila nem tanár.**
Attila is not rich./Attila is not a teacher.

**A könyvek nem régiek.**
The books are not old.

**Nem vagyok otthon./Nem vagyunk otthon.**
I am not at home./We are not at home.

**Péter nem rajzol jól.**
Péter does not draw well.

Nem may be used to negate a phrase other than the verb, in which case it may occur in sentences containing van/vannak; a negated phrase usually requires a hanem ‘rather’, ‘but’ phrase later in the sentence:

**Attila nem a házban van, hanem a kertben.**
Attila is not in the house, but in the garden.

**Nem Attila van a házban, hanem Tamás.**
It is not Attila who is in the house, rather Tamás.
17.3 Existential constructions

17.3.1

Existential constructions, i.e., ‘there is/there are’ constructions, use the verb van in Hungarian. The verbal complement is ‘what’ there is/are and therefore fills the preverb position in neutral sentences.

- **Sok gyerek van a parkban.** There are many children in the park.
- **Víz van az asztalon.** There is water on the table.
- **Nincs igazság a Földön.** There is no justice in the world.

17.3.2

Hungarian also uses the existential constructions in many expressions of time and weather.

- **Hétfő van.** It is Monday.
- **Szeptember 22-e van.** It is September 22.
- **Két óra van.** It is two o’clock.
- **Szép idő van.** The weather is beautiful.
- **Hűvös/meleg/hideg van.** It is chilly/hot/cold.
- **Vihar/szél/van.** There is a storm/wind.

17.3.3

It is helpful to consider the ‘have’ construction an existential construction (see section 17.4 for more discussion).

- **Zsuzsának három gyereke van.** Zsuzsa has three children.
- **(Nekünk) sok munkánk van.** We have a lot of work.
17.4 ‘Have’ construction

Hungarian does not have a verb with the meaning ‘to have’; instead it uses a compound construction using van ‘be’. The following are the components of the ‘have’ construction:

(a) The possessor is in the dative case; should this be a pronoun, it may be omitted.
(b) The possessed item is marked with a possessive ending which agrees with the possessor. In the ‘have’ construction, the definite article is never used before the possessed item.\(^1\)
(c) The verb van is in the third person and agrees in number with the possessed item(s) (which, in fact, is the grammatical subject).
(d) In neutral sentences the possessor is in the topic position, the possessed item is in preverb position (but see below for other word orders).

17.4.1 Possessed item is singular

(Nekem) szép kutyám van.
I have a beautiful dog.

(Neked) szép kutyád van.
You (sg.) have a beautiful dog.

(Neki), Gábornak, Magának szép kutyája van.
S/he/Gábor/You (polite sg.) have a beautiful dog.

(Nekünk) szép kutyánk van.
We have a beautiful dog.

(Nektek) szép kutyátok van.
You (pl.) have a beautiful dog.

(Nekik), a lányoknak, Maguknak szép kutyájuk van.
They/The girls/You (polite pl.) have a beautiful dog.

\(^1\) Compare with the possessive construction where the definite article is almost always used.
17.4.2 Possessed item is plural

(Nekem) kedves testvéreim vannak.  
I have nice siblings.

(Neked) kedves testvéreid vannak.  
You (sg.) have nice siblings.

(Neki), Zsuzsának kedves testvérei vannak.  
S/he/Zsuzsa/has nice siblings.

(Nekünk) kedves testvéreink vannak.  
We have nice siblings.

(Nekték) kedves testvéreitek vannak.  
You (pl.) have nice siblings.

(Nekik) A barátaimnak kedves testvéreik vannak.  
They/My friends have nice siblings.

17.4.3 egy and the ‘have’ construction

It is common to use an indefinite article before a (singular) possessed item. At such times, it usually follows the verb:

(Nekem) van egy jó ötletem!  
I have a good idea.

(Nekünk) van egy régi szótárunk.  
We have an old dictionary.

17.4.4 Moods and tenses of the ‘have’ construction

The verb van may occur in all its forms yielding past and future tenses, subjunctive, conditional, and potential moods of the ‘have’ construction:

(Nekem) jó tanáraim voltak az egyetemen.  
I had good teachers in college.

(Neked) jó állásod lesz, ha idejössz dolgozni.  
You will have a good job if you come here to work.

Évának több pénze lenne, ha többet dolgozna.  
Éva would have more money if she would work more.
Magának sok baja lehet vele.
You (formal, sg.) must have a lot of problems with him/her/it.

17.4.5 Negation and the ‘have’ construction

Negation of the ‘have’ construction is consistent with the regular rules of negation and focus word order: the negation of van, vannak is nincs(en), nincsenek, respectively; otherwise use the regular patterns of negation. Negation occupies the focus position; the possessed item is consequently removed to a position immediately behind the verb.

(Nekem) nincs tollam.
I don’t have a pen.

(Neked) nincsenek rokonaid Budapesten?
Don’t you have (any) relatives in Budapest?

Erzsínek soha nem volt saját kocsija.
Erzsi never had her own car.

(Nekünk) nem lesz elég időnk.
We will not have enough time.

(Nektek) ne legyen már rossz kedvetek!
Don’t be in a bad mood!

17.4.6 Common expressions with the ‘have’ construction

(valakinek) kedve van (someone) is in a mood (to do something)

" ideje van " has time

" melege van " is (too) warm, hot

" igaza van " is right

" köze van (something) is somebody’s business (valamihez)

" fogalma (someone) has no idea

sincs
Nincs kedvünk dolgozni ma.  We don’t feel like working today.

Lesz időd holnap?  Will you have some time tomorrow?

Melegem van.  I’m hot.

Anyámnak mindig igaza van.  My mother is always right.

Semmi közöd hozzá!  It’s none of your business!

Fogalmam sincs!  I have no idea!

17.5  Comparison of possessive and ‘have’ constructions

Because of the subtle differences between the two, it is helpful to compare the possessive paradigm with the ‘have’ construction. Note that in the possessive paradigm for nominal possessors the plurality of the possessor is marked on the possessor and not on the possessed. This difference in marking does not occur in the ‘have’ construction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possessive paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pronominal possessors:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular possessed:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>az én szobám</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a te szobád</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>az ő szobája</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a mi szobánk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a ti szobátok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>az ő szobájuk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nominal possessors:

| a nő szobája ~ a nőnek a szobája | the woman’s room (one woman, one room) |
| a nők szobája ~ a nőknek a szobája | the women’s room (several women, one room) |
| a nők szobái ~ a nőknek a szobái | the women’s rooms (several women, several rooms) |
The ‘have’ construction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular possessed:</th>
<th>Plural possessed:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Nekem) szép szobám van.</td>
<td>(Nekem) szép szobáim vannak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a nice room.</td>
<td>I have nice rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Neked) szép szobád van.</td>
<td>(Neked) szép szobáid vannak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have a nice room.</td>
<td>You have nice rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Neki) szép szobája van.</td>
<td>(Neki) szép szobái vannak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She/He has a nice room.</td>
<td>She/He has nice rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A nőnek szép szobája van.</td>
<td>A nőnek szép szobái vannak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The woman has a nice room.</td>
<td>The woman has nice rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nekünk) szép szobánk van.</td>
<td>(Nekünk) szép szobáink vannak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have a nice room.</td>
<td>We have nice rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nektek) szép szobátok van.</td>
<td>(Nektek) szép szobáitok vannak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have a nice room.</td>
<td>You have nice rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nekik) szép szobájuk van.</td>
<td>(Nekik) szép szobáik vannak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have a nice room.</td>
<td>They have nice rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A nőknek szép szobájuk van.</td>
<td>A nőknek szép szobáik vannak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The women have a nice room.</td>
<td>The women have nice rooms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17.6 Differences in ‘have’ constructions

The verb ‘have’ in English may be translated into Hungarian in a variety of ways depending on the circumstances of ownership and possession.

(a) Sok pénze van. She has a lot of money. (She’s rich.)
(b) Sok pénz van nál. She has a lot of money with her.
(c) Megvan a pénze. She’s got her money (for the train ticket, etc.).
The ‘have’ construction in (a) is used when someone possesses or owns something or has an inalienable relation to it.

Gábornak háza/két húga/sok munkája/hosszú lába/van.
Gábor has a house/two younger sisters/a lot of work/long legs.

The construction with the adessive -nál/-nél case is used when a person is carrying something along with him or her.

Nincs nála az olvasószemüvege.
She doesn’t have her reading glasses with her.

Kinél van a kulcs?
Who has the key?

Nem volt nála szótár, tehát nem tudta lefordítani a reklámot.
He didn’t have a dictionary with him, so he couldn’t translate the ad.

The construction with megvan in (c) is used when a person has an expected item with him/her, it is not lost, and/or it is ready for use. Unlike the ‘have’ construction in (a) where a definite article is never used, sentences with megvan always use the definite article.

Megvan a házi feladatod?
Have you got your homework?/Is your homework ready?

Megvan a repülőjegyem, az útlevelem, kész vagyok az utazásra.
I’ve got my plane ticket and my passport, I’m ready to travel.

Ha nincs meg a kulcs, hogy tudunk bemenni?
If we don’t have the key, how will we get in?

This is also the construction used to express having something that belongs to someone else.

Megvan a telefonszámom, ugye?
You’ve got my telephone number, haven’t you?

17.7 Impersonal constructions

Impersonal constructions are characterized by having no personal pronoun in subject position. In Hungarian, impersonal constructions consist of the following:
(a) a dative-marked ‘subject’ (i.e., what would correspond to the subject in English). If this is a pronoun it may be omitted.
(b) a third person verb or predicate adjective
(c) an infinitive declined to agree with the person of the dative-marked ‘subject’

(Nekem) tanulnom kell.  I must study.
(Neked) tanulnod kell.  You (sg.) must study.
(Neki)/Tamásnak tanulnia kell.  She/he/Tamás must study.
(Nekünk) tanulnunk kell.  We must study.
(Nektek) tanulnotok kell.  You (pl.) must study.
(Nekik)/A fiúknak tanulniuk kell.  They/The boys must study.

17.7.1 Verbs occurring in impersonal constructions

fáj  hurt  lehet  may
illik  be suitable, fitting  muszáj  must
kell  must  sikerül  succeed, manage

Jenőnek várnia kell.  Jenő has to wait.
Sikerült (neked) elérned a főnököt?  Did you manage to reach the boss?

17.7.2 Adjectives occurring in impersonal constructions

érdemes  be worth(while)  szabad  be allowed
hasznos  be useful  szükséges  be necessary
jó  be good  szükségtelen  be unnecessary
könnyű  be easy  rossz  be bad
nehéz  be difficult  tilos  be forbidden
Nem érdemes megnéznem a filmet.
It is not worth it for me to see the film.

Neked nem szabad tejet innod.
You are not allowed to drink milk.

(Neki) könnyű volt válaszolnia.
It was easy for him/her to answer.

Nehéz dolgoznunk, mikor szép idő van kint.
It is hard for us to work when the weather is nice outside.

17.7.3 Impersonal constructions without declined infinitives

It is very common to use the infinitive without the possessive endings in the impersonal constructions. Thus, the following three sentences have the same meaning:

(Nekem) dolgoznom kell. I have to work.
Nekem dolgozni kell. "
Dolgozni kell. "

Conversely, the impersonal construction without a dative complement or declined infinitive may refer to any person at all:

Dolgozni kell. I, you, we, they, people, etc. have to work.

The verb lehet is only used without declined infinitives; when the person must be specified, the potential suffix -hat/-het is used on the substantive verb (see section 4.5.2). Compare the following:

Itt lehet szép cipőt kapni. One can get nice shoes here.
Itt kaphatunk szép cipőt. We can get nice shoes here.

17.7.4 Impersonal ‘you’, ‘one’

Any construction may be made impersonal by using the impersonal az ember ‘one’; it may be any part of speech and may translate into English in a variety of ways.

Az embernek szórakoznia is kell néha.
People have to/You have to/One has to have fun sometimes, too.
Sajnos az ember nem tud pénz nélkül élni.
Unfortunately, we/you/people can’t live without money.

17.8 **Agent-less sentences (passive)**

Modern Hungarian does not have a passive inflection, but the use of the third person plural conjugation with no subject or subject pronoun can be translated as a passive in English.

Óránként közlik a híreket.
They broadcast the news every hour./The news is broadcast every hour.

Ritkán fordítják jól Kosztolányit.
Kosztolányi is rarely translated well.

17.9 **Adverbial participle with van**

In the spoken language it is common to form constructions with the adverbial participle (-va/-ve)\(^2\) of a substantive verb and use the verb van as an auxiliary. This construction usually results in describing the state or condition of the subject and is often translated into the passive voice in English.

In these constructions van is the conjugated verb and can occur in any mood or tense; in neutral sentences the preverb position is filled by the coverb of the substantive verb.

- **A kenyér meg van sütve.** The bread is baked.
- **Meg vagyok fázva.** I have a cold.
- **Meg lesztek híva.** You (pl.) will be invited.
- **A munka be lett fejezve.** The work got done.

In the absence of a coverb, the substantive verb marked with the adverbial participle is in the preverb position.

- **Az ajtó nyitva van.** The door is open.
- **Az üzlet zárva van.** The shop is closed.

\(^2\) See section 4.4.3 on how to form the adverbial participle.
When these constructions are negated (or other focussed elements occur), the negation occupies the focus preverb position and the coverb is not separated from its verb.\(^3\)

- **A kenyér nincs megsütve.** The bread is not baked.
- **Az ajtó nincs nyitva.** The door is not open.
- **Az üzlet nincs bezárva.** The shop is not closed.
- **Nem vagyok megfázva.** I do not have a cold.
- **Nem lesztek meghívva.** You will not be invited.
- **A munka nem lett befejezve.** The work did not get finished.

### Answering questions

#### 17.10 Answering questions

#### 17.10.1 Answering questions in the affirmative

Yes–no questions may be answered affirmatively in several ways.

#### 17.10.1.1

They may always be answered by **igen** ‘yes’.

- **Eljössz moziba ma este?** Will you come to the movies tonight?
  - **Igen.** Yes.
- **Lajos orvos?** Is Lajos a doctor?
  - **Igen.** Yes.

\(^3\) It may be helpful to realize that the coverb has been removed from the neutral preverb position to a position immediately behind the conjugated verb – thereby re-prefixing to its verb. This is consistent with rules of word order and focus outlined in chapter 15.
If the question refers to the verb, the verb may be used to answer in the affirmative (it may need to be reconjugated to fit the sense of the answer). If the verb has a coverb, repetition of the coverb alone is sufficient.

Eljössz moziba ma este? Will you come to the movies tonight?
El. Yes.
Eljövök.

Tanulsz? Are you studying?
Tanulok. Yes.

Kell a toll? Do you need the pen?
Kell. Yes.

If the question pertains to a particular word other than the verb, the affirmative answer may be a repetition of that word.

Lajos orvos? Is Lajos a doctor?
Orvos. Yes.

Lajos orvos? Is Lajos a doctor?
Lajos. Yes.

The affirmative answer may be a combination of the above.

Tanulsz? Are you studying?
Igen, tanulok. Yes, I am.

Eljössz moziba ma este? Will you come to the movies tonight?
Igen, el(jövök). Yes, I will.
Lajos orvos? Is Lajos a doctor?
Igen, orvos. Yes, he is.

17.10.1.5

In sentences with predicate nouns or adjectives, the affirmative answer may take yet another shape:

Lauri finn? Is Lauri Finnish/a Finn?
Igen, az. Yes, he is (that).
Az. Yes.

Toll ez? Is this a pen?
Toll. Yes.
Igen. "
Az. "
Igen, toll. "
Igen, az. "
Igen, ez az. "

17.10.1.6

Emphatic affirmative answers are persze, hogye 'of course'.

Kifizetted a számlát? Did you pay the bill?
Persze. Of course.

Tetszett a szálloda? Did you like the hotel?
Hogyne. Of course.

17.10.1.7

When contradicting a question asked in the negative, use de or de, igen 'but', 'yes'. The verb may or may not be repeated.

Nem kérsz már kávét? You don’t want any more coffee?
De, igen, kérek. Yes I do.
To emphatically contradict a question asked in the negative use dehogy-
nem, dehogyisnem ‘but, of course’.

Nem akarod megkóstolni ezt a vörösbort?
Don’t you want to have a taste of this red wine?

Dehogynem (akarom). ~ Dehogyisnem.
Of course, I do.

Answering questions in the negative

Yes–no questions are usually answered with nem ‘no’ in the negative.

Elolvastad a verset? Did you read the poem?
Nem. No.

Emphatic negative answers use dehogy, dehogyis ‘of course not’.

Beféjezted a munkát? Did you finish the work?
Dehogy! Of course not.
Dehogyis! "
Appendix 1
Some irregular verbs

lesz become, will be

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infinitive: lenni

present participle: való, levő/lévő

future participle: leendő

adverbial participle: léve, lévén

past participle: volt, lett

potential: lehet

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1 The verb tesz is conjugated exactly as vesz.
### Appendix 1

Some irregular verbs

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- **Infinitive:** venni
- **Future participle:** veendő
- **Present participle:** vevő
- **Adverbial participle:** véve
- **Past participle:** vett
- **Potential:** vehet
**visz take, carry**

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infinitive: vinni

present participle: vivő

past participle: vitt

future participle: viendő

adverbial participle: vive

potential: vihet
### Appendix 1

Some irregular verbs

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infinitive: hinni

present participle: hívő

past participle: hitt

adverbial participle: híve

potential: hihet
### Appendix 1
Some irregular verbs

#### eszik eat

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infinitive: enni
present participle: evő
past participle: evett
potential: ehet
### iszik drink

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### Infinitive
- inni

### Present Participle
- ivó

### Past Participle
- ivott

### Potential
- ihat
### megy come

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Infinitive: menni

Present participle: menő

Past participle: ment

Adverbial participle: menve

Potential: mehet

### jön go

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Infinitive: jönni

Present participle: jövő

Past participle: jött

Adverbial participle: jöve

Potential: jöhet

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Appendix 1

Some irregular verbs

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In the imperative the forms gyere, gyertek, gyerünk are more common; the forms jöjjél, jöjjetek, jöjjünk are more common in the subjunctive use of this verb.

_Gyere ide!_  Come here!

_Ne gyertek be a házba!_  Don’t come into the house!

_Azt üzente, hogy hazajöjjél._  He sent word that you should come home.

_Nem akarja, hogy kijöjjünk a vízből._  He doesn’t want us to come out of the water.

### The verb van ‘be’

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<td>volnál ~ lennél</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ő (van)</td>
<td>volt</td>
<td>legyen</td>
<td>volna ~ lenne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi  vagyunk</td>
<td>voltunk</td>
<td>legyünk</td>
<td>volnánk ~ lennének</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti  vagytok</td>
<td>voltatok</td>
<td>legyetek</td>
<td>volnátok ~ lennétek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ők (vannak)</td>
<td>voltak</td>
<td>legyenek</td>
<td>volnának ~ lennének</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

infinitive: lenni

present participle: való ~ levő/lévő

past participle: volt

future participle: leendő

potential: lehet
Sample inflectional/derivational paradigm (for first person singular)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hungarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I'll iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Kivasalom az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ironed my shirt.</td>
<td>Kivasaltam az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should I iron my shirt?</td>
<td>Kivasaljam az ingemet?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron my shirt!</td>
<td>Vasald ki az ingemet!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Kivasalnám az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would have ironed my shirt.</td>
<td>Kivasaltam volna az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I may/can iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Kivasalhatom az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Kivasalhatnám az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could have ironed my shirt.</td>
<td>Kivasalhattam volna az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I must iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Ki kell vasalnom az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had to iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Ki kellett vasalnom az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Ki kellene vasalnom az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should have ironed my shirt.</td>
<td>Ki kellett volna vasalnom az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lest I should have to iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Nehogy ki kelljen vasalnom az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'll have you iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Kivasaltatom veled az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had you iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Kivasaltattam veled az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should I have you iron my shirt?</td>
<td>Kivasaltassam veled az ingemet?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would have you iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Kivasaltatnám veled az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Appendix I
Some irregular verbs

293
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hungarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would have had you iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Kivasaltattam volna veled az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can/may have you iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Kivasaltathatom veled az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could have you iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Kivasaltathatnám veled az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could have had you iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Kivasaltathattam volna veled az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I must have you iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Ki kell vasaltatnom veled az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had to have you iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Ki kellett vasaltatnom veled az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should have you iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Ki kellene vasaltatnom veled az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should have had you iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Ki kellett volna vasaltatnom veled az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My shirt is ironed.</td>
<td>Az ingem ki van vasalva.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My shirt was ironed.</td>
<td>Az ingem ki volt vasalva.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My shirt will be ironed.</td>
<td>Az ingem ki lesz vasalva.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let my shirt be ironed!</td>
<td>Legyen kivasalva az ingem!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My shirt would be ironed.</td>
<td>Az ingem ki lenne/volna vasalva.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My shirt would have been ironed.</td>
<td>Az ingem ki lett volna vasalva.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My shirt may/might be ironed.</td>
<td>Az ingem ki lehet vasalva.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My shirt could be ironed.</td>
<td>Az ingem ki lehetne vasalva.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My shirt may have been ironed.</td>
<td>Az ingem ki lehetett volna vasalva.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will iron my shirt.</td>
<td>Ki fogom vasalni az ingemet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
And I ironed it too.

I didn’t even iron it.

I was doing a little ironing.

Ki is vasaltam.

Ki sem vasaltam.

Vasalgattam egy kicsit.

Appendix 1
Some irregular verbs
## Appendix 2

### Sample noun declensions

#### Low vowel, no loss of length

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Back vowel Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Front vowel Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>ház</td>
<td>házak</td>
<td>könyv</td>
<td>könyvek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>házat</td>
<td>házakat</td>
<td>könyvet</td>
<td>könyveket</td>
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<td>házakba</td>
<td>könyvbe</td>
<td>könyvkebe</td>
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<td>Inessive</td>
<td>házban</td>
<td>házakban</td>
<td>könyvben</td>
<td>könyvken</td>
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<td>Elative</td>
<td>házból</td>
<td>házakból</td>
<td>könyvből</td>
<td>könyvkből</td>
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<td>Sublative</td>
<td>házról</td>
<td>házakról</td>
<td>könyvre</td>
<td>könyvcre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superessive</td>
<td>házon</td>
<td>házakon</td>
<td>könyvőn</td>
<td>könyveken</td>
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<td>házakról</td>
<td>könyvről</td>
<td>könyvkről</td>
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<td>házakhoz</td>
<td>könyvhöz</td>
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<td>könyvnek</td>
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<td>házzal</td>
<td>házakkal</td>
<td>könyvel</td>
<td>könyvkel</td>
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<td>házakká</td>
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</table>
## Regular noun, ending in vowel

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>plural</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘bag’</td>
<td>‘bags’</td>
<td>‘melon’</td>
<td>‘melons’</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Plural 2</th>
<th>Plural 3</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>nominative</strong></td>
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### Regular noun, ending in consonant

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<td>singular</td>
<td>plural</td>
<td>singular</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>'chair'</td>
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<td>örestül</td>
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### Fleeting vowel

<table>
<thead>
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<th>front, unrounded vowel</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
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<td>singular</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘bush’</td>
<td>‘bushes’</td>
<td>‘twin’</td>
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<tr>
<td>nom.</td>
<td>bokor</td>
<td>iker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>bokrot</td>
<td>ikret</td>
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<tr>
<td>ill.</td>
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<td>ikerbe</td>
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<td>ikerben</td>
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<td>ikren</td>
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<td>ikerig</td>
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### V-stems

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<th>plural</th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘lake’</td>
<td>‘lakes’</td>
<td>‘stone’</td>
<td>‘stones’</td>
<td>‘word’</td>
<td>‘words’</td>
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<td>nom.</td>
<td>tó</td>
<td>tavak</td>
<td>kő</td>
<td>kövek</td>
<td>szó</td>
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<td>tavat</td>
<td>tavakat</td>
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<td>köveket</td>
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<td>tavaktól</td>
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<td>tavakkal</td>
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<td>kövekké</td>
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<td>szavakká</td>
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*Note: The table shows the forms of the V-stems with examples of singular and plural forms for each noun.*
### Possessive declension

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<tr>
<th>Low vowel</th>
<th>Low vowel</th>
<th>V-stem</th>
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<tr>
<td>(no loss of length)</td>
<td>(loss of length)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ház</strong> house</td>
<td><strong>levél</strong> letter</td>
<td><strong>ló</strong> horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>plural</td>
<td>singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘my house’</td>
<td>‘my houses’</td>
<td>‘his/her horse’</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
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<th>Plural</th>
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<td>házaim</td>
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<td>házamba</td>
<td>házaimba</td>
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<td><strong>Iness.</strong></td>
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<td>házammá</td>
<td>házaimmá</td>
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<td>---------------</td>
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<td>álom</td>
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<td>álmaítok</td>
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### Case Forms

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<th>álmaítok</th>
<th>képük</th>
<th>képeik</th>
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<td>ess.-for.</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

### Gender Specifics

- 'our reward' 'our rewards' 'your dream' 'your dreams' 'their picture' 'their pictures'
Appendix 3 Noun types and exceptions

Low vowel nouns

(Deviations from regular declension of these noun types are in parentheses. Regular declensions are found in appendix 2.)

Monosyllabic (no loss of length)

láb leg, foot
kád tub (sg3px:\n kádjá)
nád reed (sg3px:\n nádjá)
vád accusation
 (sg3px: vádjá)
had army, troops
hold moon
föld land
 (sg3px: földje)
térd knee
ág branch
fog tooth
szög nail
agy brain
ágy bed
vágy desire
háj fat
máj liver
nyáj flock
száj mouth
táj landscape
héj peel
új bow
díj prize, fee
szijj strap
nyak neck
lyuk hole
hal fish
fal wall
nyál saliva
ín tendon (acc.: ínt)
meny daughter-in-law
árny shade
szörny monster
szárny wing
talp heel
ár price
ár awl (sg3px: árja)
gyár factory
nyár poplar
szár stalk
tár repository
 (acc. tár(a)t)
vár fortress
has belly

1 sg3px = ‘third person singular possessive suffix’.
Appendix 3
Noun types and exceptions

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Monosyllabic loses length

híd bridge
  (sg3px: hídja)
lúd goose
  (sg3px: lúdja)
rúd rod, pole
  (sg3px: rúdja)
ég sky
jég ice
légy fly
bél intestine
dél south, noon
fél half

nyél handle
szél edge
tél winter
nyíl arrow
nyúl rabbit
szén coal
nyár summer
sár mud
ér vein
dér white frost
tér space, plaza
úr sir, gentleman

ész mind
mész lime
hét seven, week
út road
  (sg3px: útja)
kút fountain,
  (sg3px: kútja)
kéz hand
réz copper
szűz virgin
tűz fire
víz water

Bisyllabic (no loss of length)

oldal side (acc.: oldalt)
fonal yarn, thread
vonal line
arany gold
Appendix 3
Noun types and exceptions

Bisyllabic loses length

veréb sparrow  
elég enough  
fénék bottom  
kérék wheel  
kanál spoon  
fonál yarn, thread  
fedél roof  
kötél rope  
levél letter  
tehén cow  
cserép tile  
közép center  
mocsár swamp  
madár bird  
agár greyhound  
bugár bug  
sugár ray, beam  
pohár glass  
szamár donkey  
kosár basket  
mozsár mortar  
egér mouse  
szekér cart  
gyökér root  
kenyér bread  
tenyér palm  
szemét garbage  
darázs wasp  
parázs glowing embers

V-stems

Nominative singular and plural and singular accusative forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nom. sg.</th>
<th>nom. pl.</th>
<th>acc. sg.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>snow</td>
<td>hó</td>
<td>havak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>jó</td>
<td>jóm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horse</td>
<td>ló</td>
<td>lovák</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>word</td>
<td>szó</td>
<td>szavak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lake</td>
<td>tó</td>
<td>tavak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pipe</td>
<td>cső</td>
<td>csövek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stone</td>
<td>kő</td>
<td>kövek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stem</td>
<td>tő</td>
<td>tövek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grass</td>
<td>fű</td>
<td>füvek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opus</td>
<td>mű</td>
<td>művek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maggot</td>
<td>nyű</td>
<td>nyüvek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other sometime v-stems:

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<th>nom. (sg.)</th>
<th>nom. (pl.)</th>
<th>acc. (sg.)</th>
<th>sg3px.</th>
<th>adjective</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>louse</td>
<td>tetű</td>
<td>tetvuk</td>
<td>tetút</td>
<td>tetúja ~ tetve ~ tetves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>village</td>
<td>falu</td>
<td>faluk ~ falvak</td>
<td>falut ~ falvat</td>
<td>faluja ~ falva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ash</td>
<td>hamu</td>
<td>hamuk ~ hamvuk</td>
<td>hamut ~ hamvat</td>
<td>hamuja ~ hamvas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crane</td>
<td>daru</td>
<td>daruk ~ darvak</td>
<td>darut ~ odvat</td>
<td>daruja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hollow</td>
<td>odú</td>
<td>odük ~ odvak</td>
<td>odút ~ odvat</td>
<td>odúja ~ odva ~ odvas</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Metathesis**

Consonant switching takes place in the following nouns when suffixing endings requiring a linking vowel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nom. sg.</th>
<th>nom. pl.</th>
<th>acc. sg.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>load</td>
<td>teher</td>
<td>terhek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flake</td>
<td>pehely</td>
<td>pelyhek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chalice</td>
<td>kehely</td>
<td>kelyhek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fleeting vowel words requiring the linking vowel** \(a\)

In the following words, the last vowel is omitted and the required linking vowel is \(a\) when suffixing endings requiring a linking vowel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nom. sg.</th>
<th>nom. pl.</th>
<th>acc. sg.</th>
<th>sg3px.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lip</td>
<td>ajak</td>
<td>ajkak</td>
<td>ajkat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haystack</td>
<td>kazal</td>
<td>kazlak</td>
<td>kazlat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manger</td>
<td>jászol</td>
<td>jászlak</td>
<td>jászla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veil</td>
<td>fátyol</td>
<td>fátylak</td>
<td>fátylat</td>
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<td>vászon</td>
<td>vásznat</td>
<td>vászna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tent</td>
<td>sátor</td>
<td>sátrak</td>
<td>sátrat</td>
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</table>

**Words with variation in accusative**

The accusative singular may take either form with the following nouns. (There may be some nuanced change in meaning.)

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<tr>
<th>nominative</th>
<th>accusative</th>
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manger  jászol  jászlat  ~  jászolt  
sign  jel  jelet  ~  jelt  
bosom  kebel  keblet  ~  kebelt  
chalice  kehely  kelyhet  ~  kelyhet  
shroud  lepel  leplet  ~  lepelt  
glaze  máz  mázat  ~  mázt  
oil  olaj  olajat  ~  olajt  
bay/gulf  öböl  öblöt  ~  öbölt  
flake  pehely  pelyhet  ~  pehelyt  
Renaissance  reneszánsz  reneszánszot  ~  reneszánszt  
rye  rozs  rozsot  ~  rozst  
tent  sátor  sátrat  ~  sátort  
bag  szatyor  szatyrot  ~  szatyort  
store  tár  tárat  ~  tárt  
line  vonal  vonalat  ~  vonalt  

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